

986 *H. Howley (B) Successorly Bishop*
L E T T E R S

FROM THE

ARCHDEACON OF SAINT ALBANS,

I N R E P L Y

T O

D R . P R I E S T L E Y .

W I T H

A N A P P E N D I X ,

C O N T A I N I N G

Short Strictures on Dr. PRIESTLEY's Letters
by an unknown Hand.

L O N D O N :

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M D C C L X X I V .



CONTENTS.

LETTER FIRST.

THE Archdeacon of St. Albans declines a regular controversy with Dr. Priestley.—Produces new instances of Dr. Priestley's inaccuracies and misrepresentations, — — Page 1

LETTER SECOND.

A recapitulation of the Archdeacon's charge, — 9

LETTER THIRD.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's introductory and to part of his first Letter.—His defence of his argument from the clear sense of scripture confuted.—Of the argument against our Lord's pre-existence to be drawn from the materiality of man.—Of the Greek pronoun εἶς. — — 16

LETTER FOURTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's First Letter.—His defence of his argument from St. John's first epistle confuted.—The phrase "come in the flesh" more than equivalent to the word "to come."—St. John's assertion that "Christ came in the flesh" not parallel with St. Paul's, that he "partook of flesh and blood." — — 20

LETTER FIFTH.

The Archdeacon's interpretation of Clemens Romanus defended.—The shorter epistles of Ignatius genuine, 29

CONTENTS.

LETTER SIXTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Second.—The difference of the Ebionites and Nazarenes no singular or new opinion of the Archdeacon's.—The same thing maintained by Mosheim and other critics of great name.—Dr. Priestley's arguments from Origen and Eusebius not neglected in the Archdeacon's Charge.—Dr. Priestley's conclusions from the several passages cited by him from Epiphanius confuted.—The Nazarenes no sect of the apostolic age.—Ebion not contemporary with St. John.—The antiquity of a sect not a proof of its orthodoxy, — 35

LETTER SEVENTH.

Continuation of Reply to Dr. Priestley's Second.—Of the argument from Origen.—That it rests on two passages in the books against Celsus.—The first misinterpreted by Dr. Priestley in a very important point.—No argument to be drawn from the two passages in connection.—Origen convicted of two false assertions in the first passage.—The opinions of the first age not to be concluded from the opinions of Origen's, — 55

LETTER EIGHTH.

A positive proof still extant that the divinity of Christ was the belief of the very first Christians.—The epistles of St. Barnabas not the work of an apostle—but a production of the apostolic age—cited as such by Dr. Priestley.—The author a Christian of the Hebrews—a believer in our Lord's divinity—writes to Christians of the Hebrews concurring in the same belief. — 64

LETTER

CONTENTS.

LETTER NINTH.

The proof of the orthodoxy of the first age overturns Dr. Priestley's arguments from Hegesippus and Justin Martyr.—Hegesippus, a voucher for the trinitarian faith.—Dr. Priestley's own principles set aside his interpretation of Justin Martyr.—Dr. Priestley himself gives it up.—Tertullian makes no acknowledgement of any popularity of the Unitarian tenets in his own time, — 69

LETTER TENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Third Letter, in which he would prove that the primitive Unitarians were not deemed Heretics—His arguments from Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, confuted by the Monthly Reviewers—The insufficiency of Dr. Priestley's reply.—The arguments from Clemens Alexandrinus, and from Jerome confuted, — 77

LETTER ELEVENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Fourth, in which he defends his argument from a passage in Athanasius.—The sense of the words ἀλὶα εὐλογος mistaken by Dr. Priestley—The sense of the word συνεσις mistaken by Dr. Priestley.—Prudence and Caution not synonymous.—The matter of fact as represented by Athanasius mistaken by Dr. Priestley.—His grammatical argument refuted.—That Athanasius speaks of unconverted Jews proved from a comparison of the two clauses in which Jews are mentioned.—The Gentiles not uninterested in questions about the Messiah.—Of deference to authorities, — 88

LETTER

CONTENTS.

LETTER TWELFTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Fifth; in which he moves certain chronological difficulties.—Himself chiefly concerned to find the solution —His question divided —The divinity of our Lord preached from the very beginning by the Apostles.—St. Stephen a martyr to this doctrine.—His dying ejaculations justify the worship of Christ.—Christ deified in the story of St. Paul's conversion.—The divinity of Jesus acknowledged by the Apostles from the time when they acknowledged him for the Messiah.—Notions of a trinity, and of the deity of the Messiah, current among the Jews in the days of our Saviour, - 99

LETTER THIRTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Sixth.—Dr. Priestley's ignorance of the true principles of Platonism appears in his disquisitions concerning matter and spirit.—The equality and unity of the three principles of the Platonists.—Dr. Priestley's peculiar sense of the word personification not perceived either by the Archdeacon or the Reviewer.—The outline however of Dr. Priestley's work not misrepresented by the Archdeacon.—The conversion of an attribute into a substance differs not from a creation out of nothing.—Never taught by the Platonists.—The eternity of the Logos independent of any supposed eternity of the world.—Not discarded therefore by the converted Platonists.—Dr. Priestley's arguments from the analogy between the divine Logos and human reason answered.—The Archdeacon abides by his assertion that Dr. Priestley hath misrepresented the platonic language.—The Archdeacon's interpretation of the Platonists rests not on his own conjecture, but on the authority

CONTENTS.

riety of Athenagoras—confirmed by other authorities.
—Dr. Priestley's quotations from Tertullian considered—from Lactantius, ——— 112

LETTER FOURTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Eighth.—The Archdeacon's supposition, that the first Ebionites worshipped Christ, defended—His supposition, that Theodotus was the first person who taught the unitarian doctrine at Rome, defended, ——— 130

LETTER FIFTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Seventh.—The metaphysical difficulties stated by Dr. Priestley neither new nor unanswerable.—Difficulties short of a contradiction no objection to a revealed doctrine.—Difficulties in the Arian and Socinian doctrines.—The Father not the sole object of worship.—Our Lord, in what sense an image of the invisible God and the first-born of every creature.—Not the design of the Evangelists to deliver a system of fundamental principles.—The doctrine of the Trinity rests on the general tenor of the sacred writings.—The inference that Christ is not God, because the Apostles often speak of him as man, invalid.—The inference from the manner in which he sometimes speaks of himself invalid.—The Athanasians of the last age no Tritheists, 136

LETTER SIXTEENTH.

The Unitarian doctrine not well calculated for the conversion of Jews, Mahometans, or Infidels, of any description, ——— 150

LETTER

CONTENTS.

LETTER SEVENTEENTH.

<i>The Archdeacon takes leave of the controversy,</i>	158
<i>Postscript to LETTER V.</i>	173
<i>Postscript to LETTER VI.</i>	ibid.
<i>Postscript to LETTER VII.</i>	175
 <i>APPENDIX,</i>	 177

ERRATA.

Page 18, line 23,	for <i>the clear</i> read <i>clearly the true</i>
33,	2, for <i>Grate</i> read <i>Grabe</i>
34, note lin. ult.	for <i>Animadversions</i> read <i>Reply to Animadversions</i>
35, line 24,	for <i>specimen from</i> read <i>specimen, the argument from</i>
46,	26, for <i>that is</i> read <i>that it is</i>
47,	5, for <i>Nazarenos</i> read <i>Nasaræans</i>
32,	for <i>Offeans, the Nazarenos,</i> read <i>Offeans, the Nasaræans, the Nazarenos</i>
68,	16, for <i>evidence drawn,</i> read <i>evidence, drawn</i>
79,	21, for <i>of Christ</i> read <i>of the Christ</i>
84,	15, for <i>simple</i> read <i>single</i>
90,	20, for <i>laid</i> read <i>said</i>
114,	3, for <i>were</i> read <i>are</i>
	6, for <i>could</i> read <i>can</i>
	13, for <i>in the το θεiov</i> read <i>[in the το θεiov]</i>
119,	10, for <i>lians, those</i> read <i>lians, and those</i>
136,	15, for <i>be speaks</i> read <i>he sometimes speaks</i>
163, lin. ult.	for <i>habits</i> read <i>habit.</i>

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LETTERS, &c.

LETTER FIRST.

The Archdeacon of St. Alban's declines a regular controversy with Dr. Priestley—Produces new instances of Dr. Priestley's inaccuracies and misrepresentations.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN at the request of the clergy of my archdeaconry, I published the discourse, in which I had given them my thoughts of your late attack on the doctrine of the Trinity; it was not at all my intention to open a regular controversy with you upon the subject. I cannot think, that you have redde my publication with so little discernment, as not to perceive in it a design of quite another kind; which yet, I fear, I shall find it difficult to avow in explicit terms, without giving an offence, which, were it possible, I would avoid. But since you challenge me to a contest, in which it is my resolution never to engage; not from any distrust of my own cause, nor from any dread of the abilities by which I should be opposed; but from a persuasion that a controversy in which so little new is to be said on either side, could not terminate in the satisfaction of either party; it is necessary that both yourself and the public should be made to understand, upon what

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grounds

LETTER
FIRST.

grounds I conceive myself at liberty to decline a discussion to which you seem to think me pledged: and for this purpose, I must declare in very plain language, what I would rather have left you to collect: That my original attack upon your History was such, as to lay me under no obligation to prosecute the argument. My attack was not so much upon the opinions which you maintain, however I may hold them in abhorrence, as upon the credit of your Narrative: and if I have succeeded in overthrowing that, which the judgment of the learned must decide, I am not at all obliged to go into new arguments upon the main question. The objections, which were brought against you in my charge, all went to the proof of this single proposition. That on which ever side the truth may lie in the trinitarian controversy—I have no doubt on which it lies, but the footing, upon which I put the dispute with you, leaves me at liberty to suppose the matter doubtful; with whatever metaphysical difficulties the catholic doctrine may be encumbered—those difficulties, when the doctrine is rightly apprehended, are in my judgment not great, but I will allow you to say they are insuperable: whatever ambiguity may be pretended in the expressions of Holy Writ, in which the divinity of the Son is generally supposed to be asserted—in the greater part of the texts I perceive no ambiguity, but you may assume, if you please, that not one of them renders a certain meaning; whatever variety and disagreement is to be found in the orthodoxy of different ages—for the three first centuries the opinion of the church upon this point was uniform, but I give you leave to suppose it as unstable as the world of Heraclitus; whatever may be the intrinsic difficulty of the doctrine of the Trinity, however deficient the proof of it from holy writ, and however discordant the opinions of dif-

different ages, still I affirm, and the proof of this was the whole object of my Charge, that Dr. Priestley, great as his attainments are confessed to be in the profane sciences, is altogether unqualified to throw any light upon a question of ecclesiastical antiquity. LETTER
FIRST.

If the instances, which I have alleged, of misinformation and inaccuracy are only secondary oversights, such as affect not the main argument, and are incident to the best writers in undertakings of such extent as yours; the attempt to depreciate a work of merit, by uncandid censure, must redound to my own disgrace. But whoever will take the trouble to compare your work and mine, will find, that with all the illiberal zeal which you ascribe to me, I was not disposed to cavil about trifles. I fear it will be rather found, that I have erred in the opposite extreme; and lest I should seem too much inclined to censure, have passed over many inaccuracies, which ought to have been pointed out.

Such, for instance, is your inversion of the order of succession of the Roman pontiffs; when you mention Victor as the successor of the bishop who came after him *. Such is your assertion †, that in the age of Tertullian it was not pretended "that the subject of the Trinity was above human comprehension;" when but a few pages back ‡ you had produced a passage from Irenæus, in which the generation of the Son, which is a part only of the subject, is mentioned as so wonderful a thing, as to be understood by none "except the Father, who begat, and the Son, who is begotten." Such is your misrepresentation of the opinion of Valesius concerning the cause of the loss of Hegesippus's history. Valesius you say "was of opi-

* History of Corruptions, vol. I. p. 19.

† Id. p. 61.

‡ Id. p. 37.

LETTER
FIRST.

" nion that the history of Hegesippus was neglected and lost by the ancients, because it was observed to favour the unitarian doctrine *." Valesius hath indeed expressed an opinion, that the work of Hegesippus was neglected by the ancients, on account of errors which it contained. But what the errors might be, which might occasion this neglect, is a point upon which Valesius is silent. And what right have you to suppose, that the unitarian doctrine was the error which Valesius ascribed to Hegesippus more than to Clemens Alexandrinus, upon whose lost work of the Hypotyposes he passes the same judgment? Such another inaccuracy, to use no harsher word, is your appeal to the testimony of Epiphanius, in favour of Noetus; to prove that he was wronged by his adversaries, when he was accused of the patripassian heresy. Noetus's confession, according to Epiphanius, was this; " that he acknowledged one God, who was begotten, who suffered and died." But suppressing, or in your *rapid glances* having not observed, the latter part of this acknowledgement, asserting the sufferings and death of his one God, you produce Epiphanius as an evidence, that " Noetus was simply an unitarian, declaring upon all occasions " with great boldness, that he neither knew " nor worshipped any God but one †." Having thus vindicated the injured character of Noetus, you proceed to inform your readers, how it came to pass, that the unitarians of that age fell under the imputation of the patripassian error. Such another inaccuracy we have in your relation of the judgement, which the Roman Dionysius passed upon certain injudicious antagonists of Sabellius; who, to avoid his error, divided the holy Trinity into three persons *unrelated* to each other and distinct in

* Hist. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 9.

† Id. p. 74.

all respects. *εις τρεις ὑποστασεις, ξενας ἀλλήλων, παντα-
 πασι κεχωρισμενας, διαιρεντας την αἰγιαν τριαδα.* These
 are the words, in which Athanasius states the opi-
 nion, which Dionysius censures: and the censure
 of Dionysius upon this opinion, Athanasius quotes
 with approbation: as well indeed he might; for
 the opinion of three persons in the Godhead *unre-
 lated to each other and distinct in all respects*, is rank
 Tritheism; because what are unrelated and distinct
 in all respects are Many in all respects; and being
 Many in all respects cannot in any respect be One.
 But in your translation of the passage, by omit-
 ting the very significant adjective *ξενας*, and the
 very emphatical adverb *πανταπασι*, you leave hardly
 any difference, between the opinion which Diony-
 sius censured, and the catholic faith, which Atha-
 nasius maintained: and thus you procure your-
 self a fine opportunity, of introducing an oblique
 sarcastic stroke at Athanasius, for concurring in
 a censure upon his own opinions. “Some per-
 sons in opposing Sabellius having made three
 hypostases, which we render persons, separate
 from each other, Dionysius bishop of Rome,
 quoted with approbation by Athanasius himself,
 said that it was making three Gods*.” Surely
 truth, candor and consistency are conspicuous in
 the writings of our modern unitarians, and the
 Archdeacon of St. Alban’s is the only writer of
 the age, who deals in sarcasms!

These and other inaccuracies, which might have
 been remarked without any impeachment of my
 candor, and with advantage to my argument, I
 suffered to pass unnoticed. I chose to rest the
 strength of my attack rather on the importance,
 than the variety, of the matter of complaint. If
 the instances of mistake, which I have alleged, be

* Hist. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 65.

LETTER few in number, yet if they are singly too considerable in size, to be incident to a well-informed writer; if they betray a want of that general comprehension of your subject, which might enable you to draw the true conclusions from the passages you cite; if they prove you incompetent in the very language of the writers, from which your proofs should be drawn; unskilled in the philosophy, whose doctrines you pretend to compare with the opinions of the church; a few clear instances of errors of this enormous size may release me from the task, which you would impose upon me, of canvassing every part of your argument, and of replying to every particular quotation. A writer, of whom it is once proved that he is ill-informed upon his subject, hath no right to demand a further hearing. It is a fair presumption against the truth of his conclusion, be it what it may, that it cannot be right, but by meer accident. To be right by accident will rarely happen to any man in any subject, because in all subjects truth is single, and error infinite.

Not long since I was consulted, about a new opinion concerning the actual figure of the earth. I objected, that while the basis of the author's argument was an assumption, that the figure of the meridian is an ellipsis, in his enquiry after the particular species of the ellipsis, he had assigned properties to the curve of the earth's meridian, which the known nature of the ellipsis would not admit. I was challenged to prove a certain relation, which I asserted, between the rays of curvature in different parts of the curve—to prove the curvature at the second less than at the principal vertex—and at last I was challenged, to prove the property from which the ellipsis takes its name. Was I to blame, that I broke off the conference—
that

that I refused to contemplate another scheme, or
to examine another computation? LETTER
FIRST.

Pardon me, Sir, if plain dealing compels me to
profess, that I think little less respectfully of this
philosopher's learning in the conics, than of your
attainments in ecclesiastical history. I make this
avowal with the less hesitation, because I find my
opinion in some measure justified by your own
confessions. You confess, that my late publica-
tion first brought you acquainted with the very
name of Daniel Zwicker: that from me you have
received your first information of the concessions
of Episcopius; and the first notice of the coinci-
dence of your own opinions, concerning the Plato-
nizing fathers of the second century, with those of
Petavius and Huetius: that you had never in your
life *looked through* the writings of Bishop Bull, till
my frequent references to them excited your curio-
sity; as they gave you to understand, what before
you had never known, that the author is in high
esteem with the clergy of the establishment. What
is this but to confess, that you are indeed little
redde in the principal writers, either on your own
side of the question or the opposite? But as no
man, I presume, is born with an intuitive know-
ledge of the opinions or the facts of past ages, the
historian of religious corruptions confessing him-
self unredde in the polemical divines, confesses ig-
norance of his subject. The opinion therefore
which I formed, upon a diligent perusal of your
work, is confirmed by your own acknowledge-
ments; and my victory is already so compleat,
that I might well decline any further contest.

My alarms (if I ever felt alarm) for the Catho-
lic faith, or for the national establishment, as in
danger from your attacks, must now be laid
asleep; and will be no incentives to any very vigorous
exertions

LETTER FIRST. exertions against a prostrate enemy*. But the truth is, that I never was alarmed, and it is necessary that I should set you right in that point. When I spake of your extraordinary attempt to unsettle faith, and to break up establishments †, I spake of the end, to which your wishes seem to be carried, not of an event which I thought likely to ensue. The utmost danger, that I feared, was of an inferior kind: a present danger, not to the church, but to the more unwary of her members, who might be misled by the justly celebrated name of Dr. Priestley: a future danger to myself, if I forbore to bear my witness to the truth. For although we have a promise, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church; yet the vigilance of the Priesthood I conceive to be the ordinary means, which God hath provided for its security. I therefore thought it my duty to prevent the mischief, which might arise to the unlearned and unstable, by demolishing the credit of your Narrative, and in these subjects, the authority of your name.

The Letters, which you have lately addressed to me, give me no reason to alter my opinion or retract my accusation. They only fix me in the persuasion, that to prosecute the dispute with you, would be to little purpose. You will therefore excuse me, if I decline a controversy to be carried on, for such I understand to be the conditions of the challenge, "till you shall have nothing left, which you " may think of consequence to allege ‡." When I have shewn the insufficiency of the defence which you have now set up, and have collected the new specimens of your historical abilities, which this

* —you seem to have taken a particular alarm—I hope you will exert yourself with proportionable vigour—to save a falling state. Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 2.

† Charge, p. 5.

‡ Preface to Letters, p. III. & XVIII.

new publication supplies in great abundance, what-
 ever more you may find to say upon the subject, LETTER
FIRST.
 in me you will have no antagonist.

I am, &c.

LETTER SECOND.

A recapitulation of the Archdeacon's Charge.

DEAR SIR,

IF I could adopt your heroic plan, of writing on till I should have nothing left to say, our correspondence would run to an enormous size: for I should have more than a single remark to make upon almost every sentence of every one of your ten Letters. But as we both write for the edification of the public, and yet few, I fear, will be disposed to give a long or a close attention to our subject; the ease of our readers, if we mean to be read, must be consulted. You, I am told, in defiance of your Booksellers sage counsels, despise such considerations. But they will have their weight with me. I shall be unwilling either to fatigue by the length, or to perplex by the intricacy or obscurity of my reasoning. To avoid the first miscarriage, I shall be content to give you a sufficient, rather than a full reply; and to avoid the second, I shall endeavour so to frame my argument, that my readers may perceive the force of it, without the trouble and interruption of frequent recourse to our former publications. For this purpose I shall begin with a recapitulation of the substance of my Charge; that before I enter upon par-

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ticular

LETTER. ticular discussions, the points to be disputed may
SECOND. be brought at once in view.

The general argument of my charge, was a critical review of your History, in that part of it, which relates to the doctrine of the Trinity in the three first ages. This review consisted of two parts; a summary of the account, which you pretend to give, of the rise and progress of the trinitarian doctrine; and a view of the evidence, by which your narrative is supported, consisting of nine select specimens of the particular proofs of which the body of that evidence is composed.

Of your account of the rise and progress of the trinitarian doctrine, I said in general, that it is nothing new. That it is in all its essential parts the same, which was propagated by the unitarian writers of the last century, and, upon its first appearance, refuted by Divines of the church of England. Your answer to this part of my Charge, is, as I have already had occasion to observe, complete. You repel the imputation of plagiarism, by the most disgraceful confession of Ignorance, to which foiled Polemic ever was reduced. To this part of your defence I have nothing to reply.

To your evidence, I made the same general objection, that it is destitute of novelty; consisting of proofs long since set up, and long since confuted. That if you have attempted any thing new, it is only to confirm the gratuitous assumptions of former unitarians by inconclusive arguments, and false quotations. The nine specimens of your proofs, by which this heavy accusation was supported, were nothing less than your principal arguments in support of your three fundamental assertions; That the Primitive church was simply unitarian; that our Lord's Divinity was an innovation of the second century; and that the innovation was made by the platonising fathers. If your
prin-

principal arguments were fairly adduced as instances of weak, insufficient proof; your whole notion of the gradual progress of opinions, from the Unitarian doctrine to the Arian, and from the Arian to the Nicene faith, is overthrown. Of this you have shewn yourself not insensible, by the great pains which you have taken, to what purpose will soon appear, to answer my objections.

LETTER
SECOND.

The Nine specimens of insufficient proof were these.

Two instances of the circulating syllogism. The first, when you allege your own sense of Scripture as the clear sense, in proof of your pretended fact, that the Primitive faith was unitarian; whereas the fact must be first proved, before your particular interpretation can be admitted. The second, when in like manner you allege the pretended silence of St. John about the error of the unitarians, in proof that the unitarian doctrine is no error, but the very truth of the Gospel. The assumption that St. John is silent upon this subject, in his first epistle, is gratuitous and disputable. It rests upon a particular interpretation of St. John's expression, that "Christ is come in the flesh," which will be admitted by none, who are not previously convinced that St. John's own faith was unitarian. If St. John's faith was unitarian, the phrase that "Christ is come in the flesh" signifies only that Christ was a man: and thus we shall find no censure of the unitarian doctrine in St. John's first epistle. But if St. John was no unitarian, but a believer in the incarnation and divinity of our Lord; then the phrase of Christ's coming in the flesh cannot but be understood to allude to both these articles, as parts of the true faith: and alluding to both these articles, as parts of the true faith, it conveys a censure upon the unitarian doctrine in every form. The assumption therefore of St. John's silence, concerning

LETTER cerning the unitarian doctrine, presumes another
 SECOND. fact, that St. John was himself an unitarian. This is the primary, though tacit assumption, on which this argument is built. This argument therefore, fairly analysed, is found to circulate like the former. For the conclusion to be established is the pretended fact, that the faith of the Primitive church was unitarian. The mean of proof is the gratuitous assumption, that the faith of St. John was unitarian. But to assume the faith of an inspired apostle, is the same thing as to assume the faith of the primitive church.

My third specimen was an instance, in which you cite a testimony, which no where exists. The pretended testimony is of no less a person than Athanasius. The fact, to which Athanasius is made to depose, is the high antiquity of the unitarian faith. His testimony to this fact you find in his piece upon the orthodoxy of the Alexandrine Dionysius; in a certain passage in which he affirms, that the Jews were firmly persuaded that the Messiah was to be a meer man; and alleges, as you understand him, this persuasion of the Jews as an apology for a caution, used by the apostles, in divulging the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. The Jews, of whom Athanasius speaks, you preposterously imagine were Christians, the first converts from Judaism. Whereas he speaks of plain downright Jews; and what you take for his apology for caution in the apostles, is in truth a commendation of the sagacity, which they displayed in a judicious arrangement of the matter of their doctrine.

My fourth specimen was your capital argument for the antiquity of the unitarian faith, founded on the opinions of the Nazarenes. This argument I maintain to be lame and impotent in every part. It is built upon two assumptions, of which the one is a meer gratuitous assertion, of which no
 proof

proof is attempted; the other is accompanied with a pretended proof, which arises however from a forged testimony and an ill-founded assertion. The gratuitous assumption is, that the Nazarenes and the Hebrew Christians were the same people: where the fact is, that the sect of the Nazarenes arose after the extinction of the proper church of Jerusalem. The other assumption is, that the faith of these Nazarenes was unitarian. This is proved by the testimony of Epiphanius, and by an assumption, that the Nazarenes and the Ebionites were the same. This assertion is unfounded, and the testimony of Epiphanius is in fact forged; since it is drawn by torture from his words. Indeed it is not pretended to be more than this; that Epiphanius makes no mention "that the Nazarenes believed in the divinity of Christ:" and this notion is only his confession, that he was totally uninformed, whether they believed the divinity of Christ, or not. Were both these assumptions true, the argument would be complete. Both are false: and were either singly true; yet the other being false, the conclusion would be either the reverse of ours, or altogether precarious.

My fifth specimen was your misrepresentation of Eusebius; whom you charge with inconsistency, because another writer, who is quoted by him, speaks of Theodotus, who appeared about the year 90, as the first who held that our Saviour was a mere man; when in refuting the pretensions of the Unitarians to antiquity, he goes no further back than to Irenæus and Justin Martyr; although the writings of Eusebius himself afford a refutation of the assertion. But although the assertion, as you choose to understand it, would be liable to refutation from the writings of Eusebius, it admits an interpretation, by which the seeming inconsistency is entirely removed. The pretensions to antiquity, which

LETTER
SECOND.

which it was incumbent upon Eusebius, or the author quoted by him, to refute, were not simply pretensions to antiquity, but to a prior antiquity: and in refuting these, the author quoted by Eusebius goes back to the apostolic age.

Your objection to the doctrine of the church drawn from the resemblance, which you find between the Christian and the Platonic doctrine, furnished my sixth specimen of insufficient proof. I acknowledge the resemblance; but I insist, that it leads to an enquiry into the sentiments of heathen antiquity, which, pursued to its just consequences, rather corroborates, than invalidates, the traditional evidence of the catholic faith.

Your proofs of your second assertion, that the doctrine of our Lord's divinity was an innovation of the second age, are all of an oblique and secondary kind: such as, were they liable to no other objection, would lead to no conclusion, without a distinct previous proof, that the faith of the first age was unitarian. One of these arguments furnished my seventh specimen of insufficient proof. It is an instance, in which you cite the testimony of a Greek writer, to prove the very reverse of what he says. It is alleged by me as an instance of your competency in the Greek language in general, and of your particular acquaintance with the phraseology of the early fathers.

My eighth specimen was taken from your attempt to translate a passage of Athenagoras, at which an abler philologer, than you have shewn yourself to be, unredde in the platonists, might be allowed to stumble. I produced it, to convict you of incompetency in the language of the platonists; and to confirm a suspicion, which the very tenor of your third assertion might create, that you are ignorant of the genuine doctrines of the platonic school. Whence

it

is to be inferred, that you are little to be trusted, when you take upon you to compare the opinions of the first Christians, in which you are not learned, with Platonism, in which you are a child.

My ninth specimen was another instance of your skill in the Greek language. A passage of Theophilus, in which he expounds the word Trinity by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is produced by you to prove that the use of the word Trinity, to denote Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was unknown to Theophilus. Theophilus's words are so very clear, that the sense was hardly to be missed, at first sight, by a school-boy in his second year of greek.

These are the nine specimens, by which I support my general charge of the inaccuracy of your Narrative, and in these subjects, the insufficiency of its author. To all of them, except the seventh and the ninth, you have attempted to reply. With what success is to be considered.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THIRD.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's introductory and to part of his first Letter.—His defence of his argument from the clear sense of scripture confuted.—Of the argument against our Lord's pre-existence to be drawn from the materiality of man.—Of the Greek pronoun εως.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
THIRD.

TO remove the imputation of having argued in a circle, when alleging your own sense of scripture as the clear sense, you infer, that the faith of the first ages was exactly conformable to your own opinions; you tell me, that the clear sense of scripture and the historical evidence are collateral proofs * of the early prevalence of the unitarian faith. I shall admit this, and shall retract all that I have written, when once you shall have proved to the satisfaction of the Christian world, that the unitarian doctrine is delivered in the holy scriptures, taken in their plain and obvious meaning. But while your sense of scripture is disallowed by the majority of christians, I must still contend, that you have no right to call it the clear sense; and that any argument built on a supposition, that the scriptures speak a sense not generally perceived in them, rests at best upon a gratuitous assumption. I confess, that an argument drawn from a gratuitous assumption is not necessarily an argument running in a circle, unless the only means of reducing the assumption to a certainty,

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 4—6.

be a previous proof of the conclusion to be drawn. LETTER
THIRD.
But this I affirm to be the case in the instance under consideration. When we speak of the clear sense of any piece of writing, this very expression admits a twofold interpretation. The clear sense, may be either that which is clearly conveyed in the words; or a sense, which though it be not clearly conveyed in the words, may be clearly proved, from the context or from other considerations, to be the sense which was really present to the mind of the writer. If you allege the clear sense of the scriptures, in the first sense of the expression, in proof that the primitive faith was Unitarian, I ask whether it be not the sole end and purpose of the enquiry into the primitive faith, to settle the differences of Christians upon points in which the scriptures, if there be any ground in them for the disputes which have arisen, are not clear? You now assume a sense, which you call their clear sense, upon those very points, in order to ascertain the primitive faith. This is to reason in a circle.

But in truth the Unitarian doctrine will never be proved to be the clear sense of scripture in the first sense of clearness. On the contrary, if ever it should be clearly proved to have been the sense of the sacred writers; the just conclusion will be, that of all writers these have been the most unnecessarily and the most wilfully obscure. The Unitarians themselves pretend not that their doctrine is to be found in the plain literal sense of holy writ: on the contrary, they take the greatest pains to explain away the literal meaning. They pretend that the sacred writers delight in certain metaphors and images, which, however unnatural and obscure they may seem at this day, are supposed to have been of the genius of the eastern languages, and of consequence familiar to the first Christians; who, in

LETTER
THIRD.

the greater part, were of Jewish extraction. By the help of these supposed metaphors the Unitarian expositors contrive to purge the scripture of every thing which they disapprove, and make it the oracle, not of God's wisdom, but of their own fancies. When you therefore, as a Unitarian, say that your doctrine is the clear sense of scripture, which, according to the scheme of interpretation which you follow, hath no clear sense at all; you can only mean that this doctrine may be clearly proved to be the sense intended by the inspired writers. Perhaps in my Charge I was too negligent in the interpretation of your expressions, when I pretended to expose the infirmity of your argument. Be it so. This then is your assertion. The Unitarian doctrine is clearly the true sense of scripture. But where is the proof? You can bring no proof that will be generally convincing, unless you can find it in the faith of the apostolic ages. The faith of the first Christians, once clearly ascertained, must be allowed indeed to be an unerring exposition of the written word. To prove therefore that the Unitarian doctrine is the clear sense of scripture, which is your assumption, you must first prove that the primitive faith was Unitarian, which should be your conclusion. Still this argument circulates, and was not improperly alleged by me as my first specimen of insufficient proof.

But it is of no great importance to dispute, where the particular infirmity of this argument may lie; when you confess that is of such a sort, that you "could not suppose it would have any weight with Trinitarians*." While you condescend to employ your rare abilities in framing arguments, which will persuade those only who are previously

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 5.

persuaded, you will do little harm. Why should I disturb you in this innocent amusement? LETTER
THIRD.

To compensate for the confessed inefficacy of this argument, you tell me of another, which you might have urged, to disprove not only the divinity, but the pre-existence of our Lord; such an argument it seems might have been drawn "from the doctrine of the materiality of man, which has been sufficiently proved in your disquisitions on matter and spirit †." In which, by an analogical proof, you have refuted the vulgar error of the immateriality of the human soul, and have in consequence overthrown the whole system of pre-existence. I believe, Sir, the opponents of the Unitarian scheme will not be displeased to understand, that it is at last to stand or fall with Dr. Priestley's System of Materialism and Dr. Hartley's Theory of the Mind.

As a striking instance of the conformity between the Unitarian doctrine and the clear sense of scripture, I produced the initial sentences of St. John's gospel; in which, you know, you find a clear refutation of the personality of the Logos. In rendering these sentences in English, I took occasion to remark, that the Greek pronoun *ἐγὼς* naturally renders a person. You tell me, "it may refer to any thing that is of the same gender in the Greek language, whether it be a person or not ‡." I never meant to insinuate the contrary. Give me leave to refer you to a letter which was published in the Gentleman's Magazine for November last, under the signature of PERHAPS. You will find it in my Appendix ||, and I now declare myself the writer of it.

I am, &c.

† Letters, p. 5. ‡ Id. p. 7. || Appendix, N^o 1. & 2.

LETTER FOURTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's First Letter.—His defence of his argument from St. John's first epistle confuted.—The phrase "come in the flesh" more than equivalent to the word, "to come."—St. John's assertion that "Christ came in the flesh" not parallel with St. Paul's, that he "partook of flesh and blood."

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
FOURTH.

YOUR argument for the antiquity of the Unitarian doctrine from St. John's first epistle, the second among my specimens of insufficient proofs, rests on a supposition, that in that epistle the Unitarian doctrine is not censured. I have shewn* that this supposition will stand or fall, according as one or another interpretation of the phrase of "coming in the flesh" shall be admitted. That single expression, as it is generally understood, reprobates the Unitarian doctrine, and overthrows your supposition. You must therefore establish your own sense of the phrase, before you can be permitted to assume, that St. John is silent about the Unitarian doctrine. Now to make good this argument, you tell me that "you think," and that "it is your opinion," that the phrase of coming in the flesh is merely an assertion of our Lord's humanity†. Sir, I understood from the first that this is *your opinion*, and I doubt not in the least your firmness in it. But I contend, that no such au-

* Charge, p. 15—18. and Letter II.

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 8—10.

ority belongs to your opinion, that the bare no-
 tification of it should command the assent of the
 whole christian world, in preference to other opi-
 ons which have more generally prevailed. You
 must justify that opinion, if you would give any
 colour of plausibility to your argument. But the
 opinion cannot be justified, unless it might be
 previously assumed, that St. John himself was an
 unitarian. You will hardly say, that any believer
 of our Lord's divinity and incarnation could em-
 ploy the phrase of Christ's "coming in the flesh"
 without an allusion, in his own mind, to both those
 articles, as branches of the true faith. But such
 an allusion implies a censure of the unitarians.
 All you shall have proved therefore, that St. John
 was an unitarian, the phrase of "Christ's coming
 in the flesh" may be thought to contain a cen-
 sure of the unitarian tenets, and your opinion, that
 no censure of them is contained in St. John's first
 epistle, will be disputable.

You say, that this phrase of coming in the flesh
 refers naturally to the doctrine of the Gnostics*.
 I say the very same thing. But I say, that in the
 sense in which the Church hath ever understood it,
 this phrase refers to two divisions of the Gnostics;
 the Docetæ, and the Cerinthians; affirming a doc-
 trine, which is the mean between their opposite er-
 rors. The Docetæ affirmed, that Jesus was not a
 man in reality, but in appearance only: the Ce-
 rinthians, that he was a meer man, under the tu-
 telage of the Christ, a superangelic being, which
 was not so united to the man as to make one per-
 son. St. John says, "Jesus Christ is come in the
 flesh;" that is, as the words have been gene-
 rally understood, Jesus was a man, not in appear-
 ance only, as the Docetæ taught, but in reality;

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 9.

LETTER not a meer man, as the Cerinthians taught, under
FOURTH, the care of a superangelic guardian, but Christ himself come in the flesh; the Word of God incarnate. St. John says, that whoever denies this complex proposition, is of anti-christ. It surprises me that you should find an improbability, upon the first face of the thing, in supposing that the same expression should be equally levelled * at two heresies, which you confess to be opposite. For is it not always the case, that expressions which predicate a truth lying in the middle between two opposite falsehoods, equally impugn both the false extremes? If I say, that when Fahrenheit's thermometer in the open air stands at 60° in the shade, the weather is mild; do I not equally deny that it is insufferably hot, or insufferably cold? "Gnosticism, you say, is certainly condemned by the apostle, but not the doctrine of the Ebionites, tho' it is allowed to have existed in his time †." The doctrine of the original Ebionites, and that of the Cerinthian Gnostics, upon the point of Christ's divinity, was the same. If the apostle condemns the one, he condemns the other, whether he lived or lived not to see the rise of the Ebionæan sect. I shall hereafter have occasion to shew, that the Ebionæan sect was of later date than you imagine.

It is perhaps from something of a secret misgiving, that your interpretation of the phrase of coming in the flesh, will not be allowed to be its natural and obvious meaning; that you are so desirous to retreat into the strong-hold of Jewish idioms. You think the phrase in question "is similar to other Jewish phrases ‡," which you think will be allowed to be meerly expressive of

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 10.

† Id. p. 10.

‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 8.

humanity. I fear, Sir, it hath been the custom of
 te to lay too much stress upon Jewish idioms, in
 the exposition of the didactic parts of the New
 Testament. The gospel is a general revelation *.
 it is delivered in a style, which is not perspi-
 cuous to the illiterate of any nation except the
 Jewish, it is as much locked up from general ap-
 prehension, as if the sacred books had been written
 in the vernacular gibberish of the Jews of that age.
 The Holy Spirit, which directed the apostles and the
 evangelists to the use of the tongue which in their
 day was the most generally understood, the Greek,
 could for the same reason, it may be presumed,
 suggest to them a style which might be generally
 perspicuous. It is therefore a principle with me,
 that the true sense of any phrase in the New Tes-
 tament is what may be called its standing sense:
 that which will be the first to occur to common
 people of every country and in every age: and I
 am apt to think, that the difference between this
 standing sense and the Jewish sense will, in all cases,
 be far less than is imagined, or none at all; be-
 cause, though different languages differ widely in
 their refined and elevated idioms, common speech
 is in all languages pretty much the same.

But what are those Jewish phrases with which
 you would compare the Jewish phrase of "coming
 in the flesh?" They are the word "to come,"
 and the phrase "partaker of flesh and blood."

The word "to come" is used by metaphor I
 believe in all languages to signify either a man's

* "The religion of Christ was an universal religion,
 and the doctrines of the gospel were calculated for the
 Western as well as the Eastern hemisphere." See Mr.
 Shepherd's Preface to his *Free Examination of the Socinian
 Exposition of the prefatory verses of St. John's Gospel.*

birth,

LETTER birth, or first entrance into public life. *He came*
 FOURTH. *into the world; he came into life; he came into*
business. I have no where affirmed that such phrases
 denote any thing more than human, in any person
 to whom they may be applied. But is the phrase
 "to come in the flesh" no more than equivalent to
 the word "to come?" Are the words "in the
 "flesh" meer expletives? If they are not exple-
 tives, what is their import, but to limit the sense of
 the word *to come* to some particular manner of com-
 ing? This limitation either presumes a possibility of
 other ways of coming, or it is nugatory. But was
 it possible for a meer man to come otherwise than
 in the flesh? Nothing can be more decisive for
 my purpose, than this comparison which you have
 suggested, between the word "to come," which is
 general, and the phrase "to come in the flesh,"
 which is specific. My thanks are due to you for
 this illustration of my argument. Which will be
 rendered still more evident by applying the two
 phrases successively to a familiar instance. If some
 future Historian of these planet-stricken times
 should say, "In the latter end of the eighteenth cen-
 tury came Dr. Priestley preaching the unitarian
 "doctrine," no one will suspect any thing more,
 than that a man of this name preached this doc-
 trine. But if the Historian should say, "Dr.
 "Priestley came *in the flesh* preaching this doc-
 trine," if the writer who may use this expression
 shall have any credit in his day, a general curiosity
 will be excited to know, whether Dr. Priestley had
 it in his power to come in any way without his flesh,
 "unmanacled with membrane, joint, or limb:"
 and when once it shall be found, that he had not,
 the style of the writer will be condemned, and his
 credit perhaps lessened. I leave you to make the
 application.

But

LETTER
FOURTH.

But you think, that St. John's phrase that "Christ came in the flesh," may be expounded by St. Paul's phrase, that "he was partaker of flesh and blood." The passage to which you refer is this. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same*." As you have only hinted that some argument might be drawn from this text, to confirm your sense of St. John's phrase, I am left to divine what your argument might be. Perhaps you would reason thus. In this passage it is said of men, that they are partakers of flesh and blood: and this expression is evidently descriptive of the condition of humanity. It appears therefore, that to be "a partaker of flesh and blood" is a Jewish phrase, which signifies "to be a man." But in this same passage it is said of Christ, that "he likewise took part of flesh and blood." It is said of Christ therefore that he was a man like other men: consequently nothing more can be meant by his "coming in the flesh." If this be your intended argument, I reply, that Christ was indeed a man like other men: and this perhaps is all that is implied in St. Paul's assertion, that he was "partaker of flesh and blood." But it follows not, that this is all which is implied in St. John's expression, that "Jesus Christ came in the flesh;" which asserts indeed his humanity; but with an evident allusion to a prior condition: and the proper conclusion from the comparison of St. John's expression with St. Paul's, is this; that the two are not, as you suppose, equivalent.

But I suspect, that you connect St. Paul's expression with your own doctrine of materialism, and that you would argue thus. Since it is said of men, who are flesh and blood, and nothing else, that

* Heb. ii. 14.

LETTER they partake of flesh and blood; therefore "to
FOURTH. "partake of flesh and blood," in the Jewish language, and "to be flesh and blood," in other languages, are equivalent phrases. Therefore Christ, of whom it is also said, that he partook of flesh and blood, was meer flesh and blood; a man like other men, in whom the mental faculties were the result of organisation. Thus, you will say, the notion of Christ's pre-existence, much more of his divinity, is overturned by the apostle's assertion; and, whatever may have been imagined, no allusion to his pre-existence or his divinity was intended in any expressions of the sacred writers. The assertion therefore of Christ's real manhood is all that can be contained in St. John's expressions, that "Christ is come in the flesh." But in this argument the conclusion results not from any evident parallelism of the different phrases used by St. Paul and by St. John; but it is a consequence from a particular interpretation of St. Paul's phrase: which interpretation of St. Paul rests not upon any thing in his expressions, but upon something quite out of scripture; upon your notion of the meer materiality of man. To have shewn the true foundation of this argument is to have confuted it.

I must remark, that in whatever form this argument may be drawn, it will rest solely on the translation of the sacred text. For in the original, man's connexion with flesh and blood and Christ's connexion are expressed by different words; *κεκοινωνηκε* and *μετεσχε*. A difference, which, however slight it may appear to you, was thought of sufficient importance to be preserved in the Vulgat. *communicaverant—participavit*.

But not to lay a stress upon any critical refinements upon single expressions, let me ask your opinion, Sir, upon the general sense of the passage,

in

in which this phrase, "to partake of flesh and blood," occurs. I would appeal to yourself, LETTER
FOURTH. whether the conclusion, which you would build upon that particular expression, is not overthrown by the general sense of the passage. The purport of the passage is to assign a reason, why the Redeemer should partake of flesh and blood; that is, why he should be a man. But a reason why a man should be a man, one would not expect to find in a sober man's discourse. For why any thing should be what it is, rather than what it is not; is a question which few, I think, would ask, and none would attempt to answer. The attempt to assign a reason, why the Redeemer should be a man, implies both that he might have been, without partaking of the human nature, and by consequence, that in his own proper nature he was originally something different from man; and that there might have been an expectation, that he would make his appearance in some form above the human. It particularly implies, that an expectation of his appearance in some higher form might be expected to prevail among the persons, to whom this reason is assigned; so that the manifest manhood of Christ would be likely to be an objection with them to his claim to the character of the Messiah. This, Sir, seems to deserve your particular attention. For the persons, to whom the apostle renders these reasons for the manhood of the Redeemer, were the Hebrews; the first Jewish Christians; of whom you say, that, before their conversion at least, "they had no idea that their Messiah was to come down from heaven *," having never been taught by their prophets to expect

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 49.

LETTER "any other than a man like themselves in that illustrious character *."

FOURTH.

Upon the whole, since the phrase of "coming in the flesh" must be more than equivalent to the word "to come;" since there is no evidence of its supposed parallelism with St. Paul's phrase of "partaking of flesh and blood;" since in the discourse of any but an unitarian, it must involve an allusion to the incarnation and divinity of our Lord; your defence of your argument from St. John's first epistle is insufficient: the argument is still to be considered as running in a circle, and it was properly adduced as the second among my specimens of insufficient proof.

I am, &c,

* History of Corruptions, vol. I. p. 2,

LETTER

LETTER FIFTH.

The Archdeacon's interpretation of Clemens Romanus defended.—The shorter epistles of Ignatius genuine.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING, to your own entire satisfaction, LETTER FIFTH. made good your argument from St. John's first epistle against my exceptions; you proceed to reply to the testimonies which I produced from Clemens Romanus, for the pre-existence and divinity of our Lord.

When Clemens says, "our Lord Jesus Christ came not in the pomp of pride and arrogance, although he had it in his power," you say, that the coming alluded to was "no coming from heaven to earth;" and that the pomp of pride and arrogance, in which our Lord came not, stands for an "ostentatious display" of the miraculous powers which our Lord never made *. To this it is sufficient to reply, that my interpretation rests upon the literal sense of the holy father's words, which you suppose to be figurative; that you have nothing to object to the literal interpretation, but that it suits not with your own opinions; whereas I have something of great importance to say in its defence; that it is established by the context. "He came not, says Clemens, in the pomp of pride and arrogance, although he had it in his power, but in humility, as the Holy Spirit spake concerning him." The pomp therefore of pride and arrogance, in which our Lord came not, is

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 13.

that

LETTER
FIFTH.

that pomp, which is the proper opposite of the humility, in which the Holy Spirit had foretold that he should come. For he came not in that, but in this he came. Now to determine what this humility is, Clemens immediately goes on to cite the prophecies, which describe the Messiah's low condition. The humility therefore of an ordinary condition is that in which it is said the Messiah came. The pomp therefore of a high condition is the pomp, in which it is said he came not, although he had it in his power so to come. The expressions therefore clearly imply, that our Lord, ere he came, had the power to choose, in what condition he would be born.

In citing this passage of Clemens Romanus I dealt very liberally with you; as I trust indeed that I have done in every part of the argument. I cited the passage as it stands in our modern copies. More antient copies, those which Jerome used, instead of *καίπερ δυναμενος*, "altho' he had it in his power," had *καίπερ πάντα δυναμενος*, "altho' he hath *all things* in his power." This appears from Jerome's translation of the passage, which is in these words, "Sceptrum Dei, Dominus Jesus Christus non venit in jactantiâ superbîæ cum possit omnia *." Now with this emendation of this last clause, which it seems was an assertion of our Lord's omnipotence, you are welcome to make what you can of the preceding clause, by figurative interpretations.

No figurative interpretations will elude the force of my citations from Ignatius. But it is the particular happiness of the unitarian writers, that they are never found at a loss for an expedient. All that I say of the repeated assertion of our Lord's divinity in the epistles of Ignatius, you allow to be true "according to our present copies of his

* Hieronym. in Esaiam, cap. lii.

" epistles.

“ epistles. But the genuineness of them, you say, LETTER
FIFTH.
 “ is not only very much doubted, but generally
 “ given up by the learned*.” And lest this asser-
 tion should want that appearance of weight, which
 an air of confidence gives, you even tax my inge-
 nuity “ for concealing a circumstance which, you
 “ say, I must have known;” and you challenge
 me to prove these epistles, “ as we now have them,
 “ to be the genuine epistles of Ignatius*.”

Sir, if the genuineness of these epistles be gene-
 rally given up by the learned, my ignorance, not
 my ingenuity, is to be blamed that I cited them as
 genuine. I indeed knew nothing of this general
 giving up. But since the testimony of Ignatius is
 allowed to be express, if the epistles be genuine
 from which it is produced, permit me to tell you
 in few words what I know of these epistles.

I know that antient writers mention seven epistles
 of Ignatius, written upon his journey from Antioch,
 where he was Bishop, through Asia Minor; for
 that way his journey lay, when he was carried to
 Rome, by Trajan’s order, to be exposed to wild
 beasts. Of these epistles six are said to have been
 addressed to the churches of six different cities,
 Ephesus, Magnesia upon Mæander, Tralles, Rome,
 Philadelphia, Smyrna; and the seventh was ad-
 dressed to Polycarp. I know that besides some
 other epistles, confessedly spurious, two editions, a
 longer and a shorter, are at this day current, of
 seven epistles under the name of Ignatius, inscribed
 to those to whom the real epistles of the blessed
 martyr, according to the Ecclesiastical Historians,
 were addressed. The longer epistles first appeared
 in print in an old Latin version, published by Fa-
 ber Stapulensis in 1498; a corresponding Greek

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 13.

LETTER
FIFTH.

text was published by Valentine Pacæus, from a MS. in the Augustan Library, in the year 1557. The shorter edition likewise made its first appearance in print, in an old Latin version, published by Usher from two MSS. in the year 1644. The Greek was published by Isaac Vossius in 1646, from a MS. in the Medicæan Library at Florence. The Medicæan MS. being imperfect in the end, wanted the epistle to the Romans. But a Greek text of this epistle, perfectly corresponding with Usher's Latin version, was published at Paris, from a MS. of Colbert's, by Mr. Ruinard in the year 1689.

It has been made a question, whether the shorter epistles are from abridged, or the longer from interpolated copies. The phraseology of the longer seems in some parts accommodated to the Arian notions: that of the shorter, is every where agreeable to the catholic faith. The shorter edition hath the suffrage of the Fathers of the five first centuries; their quotations, which are numerous, every where agreeing with this text. William Whiston, a man whose memory is more to be esteemed for his integrity, and the extent and variety of his reading, than for the soundness of his judgment, from pure attachment to the Arian cause, maintained the authority of the longer copies; but his opinion hath found but few abettors, and those of inconsiderable name, even in his own party. The Presbyterian Divines, desirous to get rid of so great an authority as that of Ignatius in favour of Episcopacy, the rights of which are set very high in these epistles, were unwilling to allow their authenticity in either form. But with a great majority of the Learned these seven epistles are received as authentic, and the shorter edition is supposed to exhibit the genuine text. This at least was the opinion of Isaac Vossius, Usher, Hammond,

mond, Petavius, Grotius, Pearson, Bull, Cave, LETTER
Wake, Cotelierus, Grate, Dupin, Tillemont, Le FIFTH.
Clerc. On the other side stand no names to be
compared with these, except the three of Salmasius,
Blondel, and Dallæus. Perhaps you will add that
of Bochart. But the great Bochart's doubts went
to one only of the seven*; the epistle to the Ro-
mans; and they are founded on a chronology of
the word *Leopardus*, which Pearson hath proved to
be erroneous†.

Mosheim holds a middle opinion. The question
of preference between the two editions he thinks
undecided. Whichever edition be preferred, he
thinks the suspicion of interpolation and corruption
cannot be entirely removed. That these epistles
are of great antiquity, he thinks certain. That they
are not altogether forgeries, so credible that no-
thing can be more. But how far they are sincere,
he takes to be a knot which cannot be untied‡.
At the same time he allows, what with me entire-
ly overturns his singular opinion, that the authen-
ticity of them would never have been called in
question, had they not contained, what the advo-
cates of Episcopacy knew how to turn to the ad-
vantage of their cause. Which when the Presby-
terians and others, who were for abolishing the pri-
vileges of the Clergy, understood, they attacked
them with a warmth, by which they more harmed
their own reputation than the authenticity of those
writings||. It is true, he taxes the writers on the
other side, but not so generally, with no less in-
temperance. But, in my judgement, the authen-
ticity of antient writings must be set very high,

* Hierozoic. P. I. lib. iii. cap. 8.

† Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, P. II. p. 91—94.

‡ De Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum, p. 161.

|| Ibid. p. 165.

LETTER
FIFTH.

which could never have been brought in question but through prejudice.

With this preponderance therefore of authorities on the side of the epistles, and with this confession of Mosheim against his own opinion, I shall take the liberty to appeal to them, as they stand in the shorter edition, as the genuine writings of the blessed martyr: not free indeed from those blemishes, which arise from the haste, the carelessness, and the ignorance of transcribers; but upon the whole not less sincere, than most other pieces of the same antiquity. I shall appeal to them with the less scruple, forasmuch as the same sincerity which I ascribe to them, and which is quite sufficient for my purpose, is allowed by the learned and the candid Lardner, whose judgement must have been biased by his opinions in prejudice of these writings, if any thing could have biased his judgment in prejudice of the evidence of truth. After suggesting in no very confident language, that "even the smaller epistles may have been tampered with by the Arians, or the Orthodox, or both," he adds, "I do not affirm, that there are in them any considerable corruptions or alterations *." If no considerable corruptions or alterations, certainly none respecting a point of such importance as the original nature of Christ. I will therefore still appeal to these epistles, as sufficiently sincere to be decisive upon the point in dispute. Nor shall I think myself obliged to go into the proof of their authenticity, till you have given a satisfactory reply to every part of Bishop Pearson's elaborate

* These words of Dr. Lardner are cited by Dr. Priestley himself in his Reply to the Animadversions in the Monthly Review of June 1783, p. 36. They make a part of his proof that these epistles are so corrupted, as not to be quoted with safety. See Animadversions, p. 35.

defence:

TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

35

defence: a work, which I suspect you have not yet
looked through.

LETTER
FIFTH.

I am, &c.

LETTER SIXTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Second.—The difference of the Ebionites and Nazarenes no singular or new opinion of the Archdeacon's.—The same thing maintained by Mosheim and other Critics of great name.—Dr. Priestley's arguments from Origen and Eusebius not neglected in the Archdeacon's Charge.—Dr. Priestley's conclusions from the several passages cited by him from Epiphanius confuted.—The Nazarenes no sect of the apostolic age.—Ebion not contemporary with St. John.—The antiquity of a sect not a proof of its orthodoxy.

DEAR SIR,

THE Citadel of your strength is the argument from the Nazarenes; to which however I have given a place among my specimens of insufficient proofs. You find the attack upon this fortress warm on every side, and your resistance is proportionably vigorous. So impatient are you for its defence, that you take it out of its turn, passing by my third specimen from Athanasius, which you very properly consider as an outwork, which will be indeed of little consequence, if the citadel should surrender—which however must be the case; neither force nor stratagem can defend it.

Two points, you know, must be made out to save this argument; the one, that the faith of

LETTER
SIXTH.

the Nazarenes was Unitarian ; the other, that these Unitarian Nazarenes were the Hebrew Christians, or the members of the primitive church of Jerusalem. To prove the first point you abide by your original assertion, that the Nazarenes and the Ebionites were one and the same people under different names. This assertion you attempt to defend against my objections. We shall see with what success.

You allow that "it has been imagined by some, that there " was a difference between the doctrine " of the Ebionites and the Nazarenes, concerning " the person of Christ *." Something of a difference, some half-witted critics have, it seems, *imagined*. But you take care to insinuate in the next sentence, that none before me ever dreamed of so wide a difference, as I would put between them. It had only been imagined " that the Ebionites " disbelieved, while the Nazarenes maintained, the " miraculous conception ||;" both concurring in the disbelief of our Lord's divinity. " For as to " any Nazarenes, who believed that Christ was " any thing more than man, you find no trace of " them in history †." And you think it extraordinary, " that it should now be made a point to " find some difference between the Nazarenes and " the Ebionites, inasmuch as you believe no critic " of any name in the last age pretended to find " any ‡." Indeed, you may well be astonished. For " the learned Jeremiah Jones §" wrote a chapter to prove them the same people.

Indeed, sir, I must take shame to myself, and confess, that this learned Jeremiah Jones is not of my acquaintance. I find upon enquiry, that he is very much unknown among my brethren of the esta-

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 14. || Ibid. † Ibid. ‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 23. § Ibid.

blishment. I am informed, however, by a very respectable authority, that he was not undeserving of the epithet which you have coupled with his name.

LETTER
SIXTH.

He was, it seems, the tutor of the venerable Lardner, and was thought in natural ability to excel his pupil. Nevertheless, sir, I conceive I may be pardoned, if I presume to dissent from the opinion of Jeremiah Jones, notwithstanding the importance that may have accrued to it from the approbation of Dr. Priestley. That, sir, which you are pleased to call an imagination of some, the notion of a difference between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, was the decided opinion of the illustrious Mosheim. "This little body of Christians, says
" that learned historian, which coupled Moses with
" Christ, split again into two sects, distinguished
" from each other by their doctrines concerning
" Christ, and the permanent obligation of the
" law, and perhaps by other circumstances *."

As a certain proof that they were two distinct sects, he observes that each had its own gospel. He says, that "the Nazarenes had a better and truer notion
" of Christ than the Ebionites †."

It may be Mosheim was the inventor of this distinction, since you have not found it in any critic of any name of the last age. Perhaps, sir, you and I, when we speak of critics of any name, may not always agree in the persons, to whom we would apply that description. May I then take leave to ask, what you think of Hugo Grotius?

* *Puissimum verò hoc Christianorum agmen, quod Mosen Christo sociabat, in duas iterum dissiliebat sectas; dogmatibus de Christo, legisque necessitate, fortè aliis etiam rebus sejunctas.* Mosheim de Rebus Christianorum antè Constantinum, Sæc. 2. § xxxix.

† Nazarei nimirum et de Christo multo rectius et verius sentiebant quàm Ebionæi. Ibid. n. * * *.

Was

LETTER
SIXTH.

Was He a critic of any name? Vossius, Spencer, Huetius, were these critics of any name? If they were, sir, you must come again to your confessions. For Hugo Grotius, Vossius, Spencer, and Huetius † agree that the Nazarenes and Ebionites, though sometimes confounded, were distinct sects; and they maintain the opinion, which I now maintain, of the high orthodoxy of the proper Nazarenes in the article of our Lord's divinity.

But it may be that the Nazarenes were Unitarian, tho' they were not Ebionites. For the doctrine concerning our Lord's divinity is not the only point, in which the pretended difference is placed: and "as to any Nazarenes, who believed that Christ was any thing more than man, you find no trace of them in history ||." You have then been less successful than Hugo Grotius, Vossius, Spencer, and Huetius: not to mention others of inferior note.

You see, sir,—our readers at least will see—that you had little ground to represent the opinion, which I maintain, of a difference between the Nazarenes and Ebionites, as singular or novel. Your attempt to set it forth in that light I cannot but consider as a stratagem, which you were willing to employ for the preservation of your battered citadel, the argument from the Nazarenes. In this stratagem, if I mistake not, you are completely foiled. In your sallies against the batteries which I have raised, I trust you will be little more successful. But as too much of stratagem is apt to mix itself with all your operations, it will be necessary

† Grotius in Matth. c. I. Vossius de genere Jesu Christi cap. II. § 1. Spencer in Origen contra Celsum, ad. p. 56. Huetius in Origenis commentaria, p. 74.

|| Letters to Dr. H. p. 14.

that I watch very narrowly the manner of your approaches. LETTER
SIXTH.

Your reply to my objections against the testimony which Epiphanius is supposed to bear to the identity of the two sects, is opened with a complaint, that I have said nothing "to the arguments from Origen and Eusebius*." Sir, either there is more stratagem, or you have dealt by me, as you profess to do by the antients. You have only looked through my charge. Had you redde it through, you could hardly have missed something that I say to the arguments from Origen and Eusebius. I flatly deny any direct testimony of Origen, in favour of the identity which you would prove; and I have shewn that the passages, from which you would draw the inference, are little to your purpose†." The argument from Eusebius, you will be pleased to recollect, made no part of your original proof. It first appeared among certain corrections and additions, which are annexed to your *Reply to the Animadversions* of a learned writer in the Monthly Review. It was impossible therefore that I should take notice of it in my Charge, which had been sent to the press, and was in great part printed, before I had any knowledge of the Reply, or indeed of the Animadversions which occasioned it. But in the appendix to my Charge, which was written after I had redde your Reply, and in consequence of it, I complained, that you had made no reference to the particular passages of Eusebius, upon which you would found your argument‡.

However, that I said something very material to the argument from Epiphanius, you deny not. I

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 14. † Charge, p. 34—36. and Appendix, p. 75—77. ‡ Appendix to Charge, p. 75.

said

LETTER
SIXTH.

said indeed that no man could allege, as you do, the testimony of Epiphanius to the identity of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, who had redde to the end so much as the first sentence of Epiphanius's account of the Ebionites. And I still say the same thing. For in that first sentence Epiphanius asserts, that Ebion made additions to the doctrine of the Nazarenes. Among these additions I place, although you will not, the meer humanity of Christ.

You tell me in reply, that if I had myself redde the second paragraph of this same chapter of Epiphanius, it would have shewn me the error of my own remark; for in that second paragraph, you say it appears, that the difference between the Ebionites and the Nazarenes lay in other particulars, not in the doctrine of the meer humanity of Christ. You then produce that paragraph, with a string of other passages confirming, as you think, the assertion, which you pretend to find in it, of the agreement of the two sects upon the point in question. Epiphanius tells us, as you think, in the second paragraph of his first section about the Ebionites, "that Ebion borrowed his abominable rites (so you render βδελυρον) from the Samaritans; his opinion (γνωμην) from the Nazarenes; his name from the Jews." In the second section, as you understand him, he places the whole difference between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites in a single circumstance, totally unconnected with the opinions about Christ. In the same section, you say, he speaks of the two sects as inhabiting the said country, and adds, that "agreeing together they communicated of their perverseness to each other *."

|| Letters to Dr. H. p. 15--17.

* Ibid. p. 15.

Now,

Now, Sir, in these quotations, I have to complain partly of the want of critical discernment; partly of stratagem; partly of unskillfull interpretation; and I affirm, that not one of the passages alleged is to your purpose.

For the second paragraph of the first section, the only clause in it of which you can avail yourself, is that in which it is asserted, according to your translation, that "Ebion took ——— his opinion from the Nazarenes†." But here, Sir, is stratagem. Why is not the entire clause produced? Because the entire clause would defeat the conclusion, which it is brought to establish. Does Epiphanius say, that Ebion took his opinion simply from the Nazarenes? He says it not, even if it be admitted, that the word *γνωμὴν* is rightly rendered by *Opinion*. If *Opinion* be indeed what is here signified by *γνωμὴν*, Epiphanius says, that Ebion took his opinion from "the Ossæans, the Nazoræans, and the Nasaræans." The Nazoræans of Epiphanius (*Ναζωραῖοι*) were the Christian Nazarenes. But his Nasaræans were not Christians. They were a Jewish sect; one of the seven which were subsisting at the time of our Lord's appearance; the fifth in Epiphanius's numeration. The Ossæans were the sixth of those seven sects of Judaism. So that if any thing is asserted in this clause concerning the opinions of Ebion, it is that they were a mixture of the extravagancies of three sects, two Jewish and one Christian. But this general assertion will never determine, to which of these three sources any particular opinion, maintained by Ebion, is to be referred. It will be probable, that his doctrine of our Lord's humanity was an accommodation of the old doctrine of the Nazarenes to the prejudices of

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 15.

LETTER
SIXTH.

his Jewish friends. For how will you prove, sir, that Ebion, if he taught the same opinions which you now maintain, was not actuated by the same generous motives: a tender charity for the Jews, whom he might propose, as you do, to reconcile to the Evangelic doctrine, by divesting the doctrine of every thing properly Evangelic?

But I contend further, that the word *γνωμην*, in this passage of Epiphanius, is not rightly rendered by *opinion*. It often indeed denotes *opinion* in good Greek writers: but it is not used in that sense here. That it is not, appears from the subsequent part of the same sentence; in which *γνωμη* is mentioned as something distinct from *γνωσις* and *συγκαταθεσις των ευαγγελιων* (perhaps we should read *ευαγγελισων*) *και αποστολων περι πισεως*. “Ebion, says Epiphanius, desired to bear the appellation of a Christian, but not to adopt the practice of Christians, nor their *γνωμη*, nor their knowledge, nor their assent to the Evangelists and Apostles concerning the faith †.” Now knowledge and assent concerning faith to the Evangelists and Apostles include religious opinion: *γνωμη* therefore, being mentioned as distinct from these, is not opinion. It seems to be rather used here, for what is expressed in English by the word sentiment; a thing which often modifies opinion, but itself is not opinion. Of this use of the word examples are not wanting. “Ebion, it is said, possessed the sentiments of Ossæans, Nazarenes, and Nasarenes.” He resembled these Christian and Jewish sectaries, in that illiberality of sentiment, which inclined the Nazarenes to think the observance of the ritual law necessary to a Chris-

† Χριστιανων βελεται εχειν την προσηγοριαν, ε γαρ
δηπεθεν τιντε πραξιν, και την γνωμην, και την γνωσιν, η
την των ευαγγελιων και αποστολων περιπισεως συγκαταθεσιν.
tian's

tion's salvation, and disposed the Ossæans and the Nazaræans to many senseless superstitions. But this resemblance is no proof, that he took his opinion of the meer humanity of Christ from the Christian Nazarenes.

But if this passage is not sufficiently explicit, the second section you will tell me is decisive. Unfortunately the long passage, which you have produced from this section, wants to be set in order before any use can be made of it: and when we have made the best of the present text, which I fear is too corrupt to be perfectly restored without MSS. it will little serve your purpose. Much indeed of the confusion arises from a false punctuation, which your own translation sets in a most conspicuous light, as a little remark which you have thrown in, points out the correction of it. "—— and first, he asserted that Christ was born of the commerce and seed of a man, namely Joseph, *as we signified above* †." This assertion of Ebion's had not been signified above: it is mentioned in this passage for the first time. You remark, that these words, "as we signified above," refer to the first words of the first section †. But in the first words of the first section we have no signification of Ebion's denial of the miraculous conception, nor in any words previous to this clause of the second section: and the reference cannot be to previous words, for that which no previous words contain. The reference therefore, which is explicitly to something previous, can have no connection with the denial of the miraculous conception, which is now mentioned for the first time. It must connect however with something in the writer's present narrative, or it hath no meaning. Now in the words which immediately precede the clause

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 16.

LETTER SIXTH. which regards Ebion's heterodoxy upon the article of the conception, that is in the initial clauses of this section, Epiphanius actually repeats what he had said before. With these clauses therefore this reference to the former part of his narrative is to be connected; and the intervening clause, regarding the conception, should be set out as a parenthesis. I will now present you with the Greek text properly pointed, accompanied with two translations; your own on one side, and mine upon the other; that our readers, comparing both with the original, may judge for themselves of the propriety of each.

—he was cotemporary with the former, and had the same origin with them; and first he asserted, that Christ was born of the commerce and seed of a man, namely Joseph, as we signified above, [referring to the first words of his first section] when we said, that in other respects he agreed with them all, and differed from them only in this, viz. in his adherence to the laws of the Jews, with respect to the sabbath, circumcision, and other things that were enjoined by the Jews and the Samaritans. He moreover adopted many more things than the Jews, in imitation of the Samaritans.

Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Ἐβίων συγχρονὸς μὲν τῶν ὑπάρχοντων, ἀπ' αὐτῶν δὲ συν αὐτοῖς ὀρμαίνει· τὰ πρῶτα δὲ ἐκ παραίτησιν καὶ περιεργασίας ἀνδρός, τῆς τε ἰωσήφ, τὸν Χριστὸν γεγενῆσθαι ἐλέγχει· ὡς καὶ ἡδὴ ἦμιν περὶ ἐρησίαι. ὅτι τὰ ἰσα τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐν ἀπάσι φρονῶν, ἐν τῷ μόνῳ διεφείλο· ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τε ἰσθαῖσμεν περσσανεχέιν, καὶ σαββατισμὸν, καὶ καὶ τὴν περιτομὴν, καὶ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ὁσάπερ παρὰ Ἰσθαῖσι καὶ Σαμαρείταις ἐπιτελεῖται. ἐν δὲ πλεῶν ἔτος, παρὰ τῆς ἰσθαῖς, ὁμοίως τοῖς Σαμαρείταις διαπραττεῖται.

For this Ebion was cotemporary with these, and he sets out from the same principles with them (but first of all he asserted, that Christ was begotten of the commerce and seed of a man, namely Joseph) as hath been already related by us. For agreeing with other [heretics] in all things [else] he differed in this single point, in that he adhered to the Judaic law with respect to the observation of the sabbath, and to circumcision, and to all other things which are common to the rites of the Jews and the Samaritans. And besides, he is punctual in many things, not regarded by the Jews, in conformity with the Samaritans.

LETTER
SIXTH.

The manner in which Ebion's opinion concerning the conception of our Lord is mentioned, in parenthesis, seems to exclude it from those principles, which he borrowed from other sectaries. If those other sectaries therefore were the Nazarenes, then this opinion, as it should seem, was no principle with them; and this passage, like most of your quotations, contradicts what you have brought it up to prove.

You will perhaps object, that if Epiphanius meant to insinuate, that Ebion and the Nazarenes held different opinions about Christ, he would not have named another thing as the single point in which they differed. Nor hath he done this. Having described Ebion's doctrine as a compilation of the extravagancies of other sects, he says, he differed only in a single point. That is, there was but a single point in his whole system, in which he differed from *all* the sects from which he borrowed: which was this, that his Judaism was of the Samaritan cast. But it follows not from this, that whatever he maintained besides was to be found in the doctrine of the Nazarenes, or of any other in particular of the various heresies of which the Ebionæan was composed.

But to deal sincerely I must confess, that is not at all clear to me, that the Nazarenes are the sect intended, in the beginning of this section, under the description of Ebion's contemporaries, from whom he borrowed his principles. If they were not, this section will neither afford any proof of your opinion, nor be conclusive on the other side. The persons intended are not named, otherwise than by the pronoun *αὐτῶν*: and for this pronoun, if you examine the original text, you will be much at a loss to find an antecedent. This pronoun used as it is here, as a relative, is generally to be referred to the persons mentioned last before

ore in the author's discourse. But in all the pre-
 eding part of this discourse about the Ebionites, LETTER
SIXTH.
 he Nazarenes are no where mentioned, except in
 at sentence in which they are joined with the
 Ossæans and the Nazarenes, and at the very begin-
 ing of the chapter, where they are intended by this
 ame pronoun as the sect described in the chapter next
 preceding. The persons last mentioned in the present
 discourse are the Jews and the Samaritans: and of
 these the pronoun *ταῦτοι* may be redditive. Ebion might
 be called their contemporary, if he lived before the
 Jews intirely lost their consideration in the world,
 as a religious sect; and while the Samaritans were
 yet subsisting as a distinct sect of Judaism. He set
 out from the same principles with them, because
 he maintained the permanent obligation of the ri-
 tual law. If this be the true exposition of the
 two first clauses of this section, it is the purport of
 the parenthesis, which follows them, to remark,
 that Ebion, even in that part of his doctrine which
 could not be borrowed either from Jews or Sama-
 ritans, carried his desire of accommodating to
 Jewish principles such a length, as to acknowledge
 our Lord for nothing more than a preacher of
 righteousness. But this leads to no conclusion about
 the faith of the Nazarenes.

I have sometimes thought, that the pronoun
ταῦτοι might be redditive, not of the Nazarenes
 singly, but of all the sects which are mentioned in
 the preceding part of the narrative, as furnishing
 the constituent parts of Ebion's system; namely,
 of the Jews, the Samaritans, the Ossæans, the Na-
 zarenes, the Cerinthians, and the Carpocratians.
 With all these, according to the confused chrono-
 logy of this inaccurate writer, Ebion, as a junior
 with an elder, was contemporary: and he set out
 from the same principles with them; inasmuch as
 all his principles were borrowed, some from one of
 these

LETTER
SIXTH.

these sects, some from another; the only thing which was peculiar to himself being this; that the Judaism, which he practised, was of the Samaritan cast. In this exposition of the pronoun *ταύτων*, the importance of the parenthesis must be to signify, that the meer humanity of Christ was made a principle by Ebion; although it was no principle with those from whom he borrowed. It was indeed a part of the Cerinthian doctrine, not as a principle, but as a consequence from principles. The principles of the Cerinthian doctrine were the principles of the oriental philosophy: and the denial of our Lord's divinity, and of his miraculous conception, in the system of Cerinthus was a consequence of that cardinal principle of the oriental philosophy, which put eternal enmity between God and every thing material. But with Ebion the denial of the miraculous conception was itself a first principle, independent of every thing else. In this view of it again the parenthesis leads to no conclusion concerning the Nazarenes.

Which exposition of the pronoun *ταύτων* is to be preferred, is a point upon which I can bring myself to no fixed opinion. I very much suspect, as I have already observed, some considerable corruption of the text. For although Epiphanius is indeed a wretched writer, the obscurity of this sentence, as it stands, is more than mere bad writing is apt to create. But expound the pronoun as you please the passage will be either against you, or at the best nothing to your purpose.

But in a subsequent sentence, Epiphanius speaks, it seems, "of the Ebionites as inhabiting the same country as the Nazarenes;" and adds, "that agreeing together they communicated of their *per-verse*ness to each other." It is true, that in the passage which you have produced Epiphanius speaks of the Ebionites as the near neighbours of cer-

certain Nazarenes, and of a resemblance which LETTER SIXTH. the vicinity of situation produced. But the Nazarenes intended, were they the Christian Nazarenes, or the Nasaræan Jews? They are called "the lawless Nazarenes" [*Ναζαρηνοὶ οἱ ἀνόμοιοι*]. The Christian Nazarenes had nothing in their conduct, that might render them deserving of this epithet. Their error was, that they feared to use their liberty, not that they abused it. The Nasaræan Jews, as Jews, were lawless in a very emphatic sense; inasmuch as they renounced the whole of the Mosaic law, except that they circumcised, kept the Sabbath, and paid some regard to the stated festivals. It was not, that they denied the authority of Moses; but, by what may be gathered from Epiphanius's account of them, they pretended that the real laws of Moses were lost, and that the Pentateuch of the Jews was in all but the historical parts a spurious work. Upon these principles they held themselves released from all rites, but those which the history itself confirmed. This sect was found chiefly in the region of Basanitis: and in a town called Cochaba, in the same region, Epiphanius places the original residence of Ebion. These Nasaræans therefore were neighbours of the Ebionites, and they seem to be the people intended in this passage.

It may perhaps seem strange, that any resemblance should be pretended, between a Christian sect which adhered to the Mosaic law, and a Jewish sect which rejected it. But the first Ebionites, if Epiphanius is to be trusted in his description of them, retained nothing more of genuine Judaism than the Nasaræans. Whatever more they had which looked like Judaism, it was borrowed from the Samaritan superstition.

But whoever these lawless Nazarenes might be, their agreement with the Ebionites, is an addition
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LETTER
SIXTH.

of your own, founded on a misinterpretation of the original. Epiphanius answers for nothing more than some general resemblance. His words are to this effect. "From hence he began to propagate his pernicious doctrine; namely, from the same parts, which it hath before been said those lawless Nazarenes inhabited. For being contiguous, he to them and they to him, each imparted to the other of his own particular impiety. And yet in certain things they differ; but in evil disposition they were counterparts one to the other.*" What you took for agreement is contiguity of situation; and the resemblance comes at last to nothing more, than an undefined general resemblance, with specific differences. An entire likeness is not pretended in any circumstance but the common depravity of disposition.

To these passages from the chapter about the Ebionites you subjoin another, from the 7th section of the preceding chapter, which treats of the Nazarenes. "He says, that they were Jews in all respects, except that they believed in Christ; but I do not know whether they hold the miraculous conception or not †." This you say, "amounts to no more than a doubt, which he afterwards abandoned, by asserting that the Ebionites held the same opinion concerning Christ with the Nazarenes, which opinion he expressly states to be their belief, that Jesus was a meer man, and the son of Joseph ‡." I lament, Sir, that

* Ενθεν ἀρχεῖται τῆς κακῆς αὐτῆς διδασκαλίας, ὅθεν θη-
θεν καὶ Ναζαρηνοὶ οἱ ἀνόμοι προδεδηλωταί. Συναφθεὶς γὰρ,
ἐστὸς ἐκείνοις καὶ ἐκεῖνοι τῷ, ἐκαστέρος ἀπο τῆς ἐαυτῆς μοχθη-
ρίας τῷ ἑτέρῳ μετεδώκε. καὶ διαφεροῦνται μὲν ἕτερος πρὸς τὸν
ἕτερον κατὰ τι, ἐν δὲ τῇ κακονομίᾳ ἀλλήλους ἀπεμαζαίνω.

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 17.

‡ Ibid.

in justice to my own cause I must here openly LETTER
SIXTH.
complain of the perverseness of your translation. When you cite an antient author, why will you make him say more or less than he hath said for himself? Why not translate literally? that your readers might see, how far your account of things is supported by express testimony, how far it is meer inference; and be enabled to estimate the degree of probability, with which each inference is accompanied. “—— they believed in Christ, but I do not know whether they held the miraculous conception or not.” Is this a translation of the words of Epiphanius? It is not. It is an artful substitution of an inference of your own, from the author’s words, for the words of the author. I, Sir, in my Charge had furnished you with a more exact translation*. Why would you not adopt it, unless you could have made a better of your own, or could have shewn its impropriety? “Concerning Christ, says Epiphanius, I cannot say with certainty [or, I am not informed to say *ἐκ οὐδενος εἰπέν*] whether they too, carried away with the impiety of the aforementioned Cerinthus and Merinthus, think him a meer man; or affirm, as the truth is, that he was begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghost.” To affirm, “as the truth is, that Christ was begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghost,” in Epiphanius’s sense of those words, was to affirm much more than the miraculous conception, in any sense in which an unitarian might affirm it. It was to affirm our Lord’s divinity. Epiphanius’s confession, that he had no ground to assert, that the Nazarenes held the contrary opinion, amounts to much more than a doubt. It amounts to an unwilling confession of a base accuser, who had not the liberality to absolve

* Charge, p. 26.

LETTER
SIXTH.

in explicit terms, when he found himself unable to convict. As you have not yet produced the passage, in which Epiphanius asserts, that the Nazarenes and Ebionites held one opinion concerning Christ; your assertion, that he afterwards abandoned this doubt, or this acknowledgement, is destitute of proof; and it is the fair conclusion from this passage of Epiphanius, that the Nazarenes were orthodox in their opinions concerning Christ. This I shewed at large in my Charge*. You now attempt to elude my argument, by setting up an unfair and sophisticated translation of the passage, upon which my reasoning was founded.

Were the identity of the Nazarenes and Ebionites clearly established, still you could turn it to no advantage, without making good your other assertion, that the Nazarenes were originally the very same with the Hebrew Christians, or the members of the Primitive Church of Jerusalem. But of this I cannot find that you have brought a shadow of a proof, except what you pretend to derive from the testimony of Origen; which I shall consider in my next letter. You talk indeed of the antiquity of the Nazarenes. You bid me observe, "that they were prior to Ebion†." Of whom you say, that "he was himself co-temporary with the apostle John‡." And you tell me, that in allowing that the "Jewish Christians were distinguished by the name of Nazarenes ——— from the time that they were settled in the country beyond the sea of Galilee, I carry the opinions of the Ebionites, as universally held by the Jewish Christians, to the very age of the Apostles§." When you do me the honour to argue from my concessions, I wish, Sir, you would report them

* P. 26—28.

† Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 18.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid. p. 21.

with more fidelity and exactness. I have allowed no such antiquity to the Nazarenes, as you would claim for them upon the ground of my concessions. I said not, that the Jewish Christians were distinguished by the name of Nazarenes, from the time when the first settlements were made beyond the sea of Galilee. I said, that the sect of the Nazarenes first arose when those of the Jewish Christians, who pertinaciously retained their Judaism, made their final settlement in those parts, in consequence of Adrian's severe edicts, by which the Jews were banished from the antient site of Jerusalem and the adjacent region. Thus I carried not the opinions of the Ebionites up to the Apostolic age: but I fixed the rise of a prior sect to an epoch little earlier than the middle of the second century. I maintained, that the Nazarenes at that time separated from the main body of the Jewish Christians, and appeared as a distinct sect. It is not allowed by me, that from that time, or in any age of the Church, "the whole body of the Jewish Christians were distinguished by the name of Nazarenes." If any such concession may seem to be implied in the expressions in which I speak of the Nazarenes in my Charge (p. 29) I disavow it. Appealing against your assertions to the sense of the learned and reverend assembly which I had the honour to address; I rather sought expressions, which might convey the general part of an opinion common to us all, than such as might more precisely mark the particulars of my own. That the name of Nazarene was descriptive of a heresy, I was confident none in that assembly doubted. I was not equally confident but that some might doubt, whether that heresy, from the time the name was used, embraced not the main body of the Jewish Christians. Whatever doubts might subsist about the extent, I was confident

LETTER
SIXTH.

LETTER
SIXTH.

fidest there could be but one opinion, in that assembly, about the chronology of the name. But Ebion, you say, was contemporary with St. John. To that circumstance, when it is proved, I shall be disposed to give great attention. I believe the opinion hath no foundation, but in the foolish story told by Epiphanius of St. John and Ebion in the bath. The same is told by other writers of St. John and Cerinthus; and it hath altogether the air of fiction. But suppose I were to allow the highest antiquity to these Nazarenes. Suppose that with you I were to place them in the Apostolic age. Would this oblige me to allow, that they were the true members of the Primitive church? Had not the Apostolic age its schisms and its heresies? The Simonians, the Nicolaitans, the Cerinthians; were not all these contemporary with the Apostles? Were they therefore sound members of the Church of Jerusalem? Be pleased, Sir, to consider this question.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER SEVENTH.

Continuation of Reply to Dr. Priestley's Second.—Of the argument from Origen.—That it rests on two passages in the books against Celsus—The first misinterpreted by Dr. Priestley in a very important point.—No argument to be drawn from the two passages in connection.—Origen convicted of two false assertions in the first passage.—The opinions of the first age not to be concluded from the opinions of Origen's.

DEAR SIR,

IN failure of all other proof of your supposed LETTER
SEVENTH
identity of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, you will appeal to the testimony of Origen. You have however given a new turn to this part of your argument. Your appeal was originally * to a pretended acknowledgement of Origen's, that the Nazarenes and the Ebionites were the same people. But being made sensible †, how difficult it must be to find an acknowledgement of this Identity, in a writer who never once names the Nazarenes; you abandon that project, and in the passages which were at first cited to establish this supposed identity, you have at last the good fortune to discover an immediate proof of your main proposition, that the primitive faith of the Hebrew Church was unitarian. Your method is to trace from Origen the faith of the Jewish Christians in his age, and from their faith to infer that of their ancestors.

* History of Corruption, Vol. I. p. 7.

† See the Monthly Review for June 1783, and for September 1783.

The

LETTER
SEVENTH

The strength of this argument lies in two passages in the books against Celsus; which are very distant from each other, for the one is in the second, the other in the fifth book; and yet they must be taken in connection to give any colour to your reasoning. You set it off indeed to great advantage, when, appealing to the first of these passages, you say, that it appears, and that I deny not that it appears, "that the unbelieving Jews" called all those of their race, who were Christians, "by the name of Ebionites in the time of Origen;" and that "Origen's own words are too express, to admit any doubt of this*." Truly, Sir, I was not likely to deny a groundless assertion, before it was made by my antagonist; and you now make it for the first time; at least I remember nothing like it in your former publications. I believe I was myself the first to bring forward this passage from the second book against Celsus. In your history you have appealed to Origen's acknowledgement of the identity of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, without any reference to particular passages. I produced this passage, as of all that I could recollect the most for your purpose†. I produced it in order to shew, that when it is rightly understood, it is nothing to your purpose: for, altho' the Christians of the circumcision in general are in this passage called Ebionites, it is according to a peculiar definition of the word, which includes not what by other writers always, and by Origen himself in other places, is included in the notion of the Ebionæan doctrine; namely, a denial of our Lord's divinity. The Nazarenes therefore might be Ebionites, in the sense which is here given to that word, altho' they doubted not our Lord's divinity, and were quite another set of people than the proper

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 18.

† Charge, p. 35.

Ebionites;

Ebionites. I acknowledge therefore, that in this passage, "Origen says of the Jewish Christians of his own time that they were Ebionites*." These were my very words. But I said not, that they were the unbelieving Jews, who imposed this name upon the converted: and now that you have been pleased to say it for me, I deny it; and I maintain, that Origen's words are too express to admit a doubt, that you have mistaken his meaning. The entire passage of Origen † is to this effect——

"they of the Jews who believe in Christ have not abandoned the law of their ancestors; for they live according to it; bearing a name, which corresponds with the poor expectations which the law holds out ‡. For a beggar is called among the Jews [that is in the Hebrew language] Ebion. And they of the Jews who have received Jesus as the Christ, go by the name of Ebionæans." The converted Jews went, it is said, by this name. But where have you found that the unbelieving Jews imposed it? Not in Origen, Sir; but in the Latin translation of Genesius. Attend to the reasons assigned by Origen for the name, and you cannot but perceive, that it could never be imposed by Jews. It was given in contempt: the objects of the contempt were observers of the Mosaic law; and the cause of the contempt was the mean opinion, which was enter-

* Charge, p. 35.

† —οἱ ἀπο Ἰουδαίων εἰς Ἰησοῦν πιστευούτες ἔ καὶ ἀλελοι-
πάσι τον παλριον νομον, βιωσι γὰρ καὶ αὐτοί, ἐπὶ νόμῳ της
καλᾶ την ἐκδοκην πτωχειας τε νομῶ γεγεννημένοι. Εβίων τε
γὰρ ὁ πτωχος παρα Ἰουδαίους καλεῖται, καὶ Εβιωνανοὶ χρημα-
τιζουσιν οἱ ἀπο Ἰουδαίων τον Ἰησοῦν ὡς Χριστον παραδεξαμενοι.
Origen in Celsus, p. 56. edit. Spencer.

‡ Literally, *being named after the poverty of the law in expectation.*

H

tained

LETTER
SEVENTH

tained by those who gave the name, of expectations built on legal righteousness. Could these, Sir, be the sentiments of unconverted Jews?

It would have been a circumstance of much advantage to your argument, which I doubt not you well understand, that the unconverted Jews should have been the coiners of the name: because it would have followed, that the name was originally common to the whole body of the Hebrew Christians. Then since Origen, in the other passage in the 5th book, makes, as you observe, only two sorts of Ebionites, the one believing, the other denying the miraculous conception; the deduction might have seemed not unfair, that Origen knew of no Hebrew Christians that were not unitarians.

You will say, perhaps, that since we have Origen's testimony for the universality of the name, the argument from the two passages taken in connection may still proceed. If I could admit the universality of the name upon Origen's testimony, I should insist that his description of the twofold Ebionites, in the fifth book, is not exactly what you take it to be. I should remark, that the words, *ὁμοίως ἡμιν*, "in like manner as we do," make an important branch of the character of the milder sort——"these, says he, are the double Ebionites; who either confess Jesus born of a virgin, *in like manner as we do*, or think he was not born in that manner, but like other men*." I should maintain, that the words "in like manner

* Εἰσὼσαν δὲ τινες καὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀποδεχομένοι, ὡς παρὰ τὸ Χριστιανοὶ εἶναι ἀνθρώπους, ἐπὶ δὲ κατὰ τὸν Ἰουδαίων νομὸν, ὡς τὰ Ἰουδαίων πληθὺν, βίβην ἐθελοῦντες· ἑτοὶ δὲ εἰσὶν οἱ διττοὶ Εβιωναῖοι, ἡτοὶ ἐκ παρθενης ὁμολογούντες ὁμοίως ἡμῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἢ ἐκ ἑτῶ γεγεννηθῆναι, ἀλλ' ὡς τὰς λοιπὰς ἀνθρώπους· τί τὸτο φέρει ἐγκλημα τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας.
Contra Cels. p. 272.

“as we do,” are equivalent to the words “as the truth is,” in Epiphanius’s description of that belief in the miraculous conception, which he says the Nazarenes, for aught he knew to the contrary, might hold; and I should contend, that Origen affirms, but with less equivocation, of these better Ebionites, what Epiphanius reluctantly confesses of the Nazarenes, that they held the catholic doctrine concerning the nature of our Lord. And in this manner the words of Origen seem to have been understood both by Grotius and Vossius; when they allow, that the Nazarenes, though orthodox in this part of their faith, are included, in this passage of Origen’s fifth book, in the appellation of Ebionites. I should contend, that if the former passage prove the name general for the whole body of the Hebrew Christians; the latter equally proves, that the notion of an unitarian was not necessarily included in it. The connection therefore of these two passages makes little for your purpose, since the second serves but to overthrow the argument, which might be built upon the first. It justifies what I advanced in my Charge, upon a presumption that the first singly would be made the foundation of the argument from Origen; that the word Ebionite, in Origen’s time, or at least in his use of it, had outgrown its original meaning.

In this manner I should combat your argument from these two passages; were it not that I think too lightly of the testimony of Origen, in what relates to the Hebrew Christians, to be solicitous to turn it to my own advantage. Let his words be taken as you understand them; and so far as the faith of the Hebrew Christians of his own time is in question, let him appear as an evidence on your side.—I shall take what you may think a bold step. I shall tax the veracity of your witness—of this Origen. I shall tell you, that whatever may be the

LETTER
SEVENTH

general credit of his character, yet in this business the particulars of his deposition are to be little regarded, when he sets out with the allegation of a notorious falsehood. He alleges of the Hebrew Christians in general, that they had not renounced the Mosaic law. The assertion served him for an answer to the invective, which Celsus had put in the mouth of a Jew against the converted Jews, as deserters of the laws and customs of their ancestors. The answer was not the worse for wanting truth, if his Heathen antagonist was not sufficiently informed in the true distinctions of Christian sects, to detect the falsehood. But in all the time which he spent in Palestine, had Origen never conversed with Hebrew Christians of another sort? Had he met with no Christians of Hebrew families, of the church of Jerusalem? Was the Mosaic law observed, was it tolerated, in Origen's days, in the church of Jerusalem, when that church was under the government of Bishops of the uncircumcision? The fact is, that after the demolition of Jerusalem by Adrian, the majority of the Hebrew Christians, who must have passed for Jews with the Roman magistrates, had they continued to adhere to the Mosaic Law, which to this time they had observed more from habit than from any principle of conscience, made no scruple to renounce it; that they might be qualified to partake in the valuable privileges of the *Ælian* Colony, from which Jews were excluded. Having thus divested themselves of the form of Judaism, which to that time they had born, they removed from Pella, and other towns to which they had retired, and settled in great numbers at *Ælia*. The few, who retained a superstitious veneration for their law, remained in the North of Galilee, where they were joined perhaps by new fugitives of the same weak character from Palestine. And this was the beginning of the

the sect of the Nazarenes. But from this time, LETTER
SEVENTH whatever Origen may pretend to serve a purpose, the majority of the Hebrew Christians forsook their law, and lived in communion with the Gentile Bishops of the new-modelled church of Jerusalem; for the name was retained though Jerusalem was no more, and the seat of the Bishop was at Ælia. All this I affirm with the less hesitation, being supported by the authority of Mosheim *. From whom indeed I first learnt to rate the testimony of Origen, in this particular question, at its true value †.

It is in defiance therefore of the fact, and I fear of his own knowledge of the fact, that Origen affirms of the Hebrew Christians in general, that they lived in the observance of the Mosaic law: and it must be equally in defiance of the fact that he affirms, that they were all in general called Ebionites: for he pretends not, that this name generally belonged to them otherwise than as Judaizers. His expressions in the passage in the fifth book seem to imply a retractation of both these assertions. For there he speaks only of *some*, who, with the profession of Christianity, retained the practice of Judaism. These *some* he says were the Ebionites; and, which is more, he describes these Ebionites, not indeed as universally unitarians, but as despicable wretched heretics, whose extravagancies could bring no disgrace upon the Christian church, of which they were no part. Were the Hebrew Christians, living in communion with the Bishop of Jerusalem, in the days of Origen, no part of the true church of Christ? If they were a part of it, in Origen's own judgment, they were no

* De rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum. Sæc. II. §. 38. Not.*

† See his Dissertation about Ebion, which is the tenth in order in the First Volume of a Collection, intitled, *Dissertationes ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam pertinentes.*

LETTER Ebionites. "I would not believe this witness upon
SEVENTH "his oath," says Mosheim, "vending, as he manifestly does, such flimsy lies *."

I may now, Sir, without damage to my cause, freely make you a present of the whole testimony of Origen, not only as it is given by him, but as it is interpreted by you. As it is given by him, it states, that the Hebrew Christians in his time were generally Judaizers. As interpreted by you, it states, that in his time they were generally unitarian. But if this testimony were more unexceptionable than it is, and this sense of the testimony less doubtful, what evidence would it afford, that the first Hebrew Christians were Unitarians, in the time of the Apostles?

You pretend not, that this would follow by necessary consequence. But you say, "if the Jewish Christians were universally Ebionites in the time of Origen, the probability is, that they were very generally so in the time of the Apostles †." Whence should this probability arise? From this general maxim, it seems; that "whole bodies of men do not soon change their opinion ‡. You are indeed, Sir, the very last person, who might have been expected to form conclusions upon an historical question from meer theory, in defiance of the experience of mankind: in defiance of the experience of our own country and our own times. How long is it, since the whole body of dissenters in this kingdom (the single sect of the quakers excepted) took their standard of orthodoxy from the opinions of Calvin? Where shall we now find a dissenter, except perhaps among the dregs of Me-

* Ego huic testi, etiamsi jurato, qui tam manifesto fumos vendit, me non crediturum esse confirmo. Mosheim de Ebione. §. x.

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 21.

‡ Ibid.

thodism, who would not think it an affront to be
taken for a Calvinist? LETTER
SEVENTH

I now, Sir, take my leave of your argument from the Nazarenes. I trust I have shewn, that, although it is the chief strength of your cause, it was well intitled to a place among my specimens of insufficient proof, of which it was the fourth in order. Before I proceed to examine other parts of the evidence, by which you think to establish the high antiquity of the unitarian doctrine; give me leave to remind you, that, although you have overlooked it, a very positive proof is at this day extant in the world; that the Divinity of Christ was the belief of the very first Christians. This shall be the subject of my next letter.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER EIGHTH.

A positive proof still extant that our Lord's divinity was the belief of the very first Christians.—The Epistle of St. Barnabas not the work of an apostle, but a production of the apostolic age—cited as such by Dr. Priestley.—The author a Christian of the Hebrews—a believer in our Lord's divinity—writes to Christians of the Hebrews concurring in the same belief.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
EIGHTH.

I AM to produce a positive proof, that the divinity of our Lord was the belief of the very first Christians. Give me leave then to ask your opinion of that book, which hath been current in the church from the very first ages, under the title of *The Epistle of St. Barnabas*. It is quoted you know by Clemens Alexandrinus, not to mention later writers, as the composition of Barnabas the apostle. Take no alarm, Sir—I shall not claim a place for it in the canon. I shall not contend that any apostle was its author. I am well persuaded of the contrary. But the reasons which persuade me, are such as ought to have no weight with you, if you will be true to your own principles. The style is indeed embarrassed and undignified; the reasoning is often unnatural and weak. Texts of the Old Testament are drawn by violence to allegorical senses, which are inadmissible; as when Moses, encouraging the Israelites to take possession of the promised land, is supposed to exhort the Jews to embrace the Christian religion; and in the description of Canaan, as a land flowing with milk

milk and honey, the land is our Saviour's body, LETTER
 the milk and honey are the doctrines and promises EIGHTH.
 of the gospel. The attempt to find evangelical
 types in the Jewish rites is injudiciously conducted.
 The essential part of a rite, which was of divine
 appointment, is often superficially treated; and
 the supposed sense of subordinate ceremonies, and
 those very often of human institution and of no
 significance, is pursued with a trifling exactness:
 thus in the exposition of the red heifer, and in that
 of the scape goat, the stress is principally laid upon
 circumstances about which the divine law is silent.
 But what may least of all be reconciled with the
 apostolic spirit, is that strange cabalistic process,
 by which the name of Jesus and the cross are
 drawn from the number of Abraham's armed do-
 mestic; and the great credit which the author
 gives himself for such discoveries. My notion of
 inspiration will not allow me to believe, that an
 inspired apostle could be the writer of such a book,
 and be vain of having written it. Your principles
 leave you at liberty to be less scrupulous. You,
 who have convicted St. Paul of reasoning to pre-
 carious conclusions*, may easily admit that St.
 Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, might reason
 from false premises. You, who think that one
 apostle "has strained his imagination very much†"
 to find analogies between the rites of Judaism and
 something in Christianity, may easily suppose that
 another apostle from the same motive, a desire of
 reconciling the Jews to Christianity, may have
 strained much more to make the analogy much more
 complete. I can therefore see no reason, why you
 should not receive what is called the Epistle of St.
 Barnabas, extravagant and nonsensical as it is in

* History of Corruptions, vol. II. p. 370.

† ——— vol. I. p. 24.

LETTER
EIGHTH.

many parts, for the genuine work of Barnabas the apostle. But this is much more than I desire, and much more than is necessary to my argument. I suppose, however, that you will allow, what all allow, that the book is a production of the apostolic age: in the fifth section of your history of the doctrine of atonement, you quote it among the writings of the apostolic fathers. I think it fair to remind you of this circumstance, lest you should hastily advance a contrary opinion, when you find the testimony of this writer turned against you. You allow him a place then among the fathers of the apostolic age: and will you not allow that he was a believer in our Lord's divinity? I will not take upon me, Sir, to answer this question for you; but I will take upon me to say, that whoever denies it, must deny it to his own shame. "The Lord, says Barnabas, submitted to suffer for our soul, although he be THE LORD OF THE WHOLE EARTH, unto whom he said, the day before the world was finished, Let us make man after our image and our likeness †." Again, "— for if he had not come in the flesh, how could we mortals seeing him have been preserved; when they who behold the sun, which is to perish and is the work of his hands, are unable to look directly against its rays §. Compare Deut. xviii. 16. Exod. xxxiii. 20. Judges vi. 23. and xiii. 22. Again "—— if then the Son of God, being Lord, and being to judge the quick and dead, suffered to the end that his wound might

† Dominus sustinuit pati pro animâ nostrâ, cum sit orbis terrarum dominus, cui dixit die ante constitutionem sæculi "Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram. § v.

§ ——— ει γαρ μη ήλθεν εν σαρκι, πως αν εσωθημεν ανθρωποι βλεποντες αυτου, οτι τον μελλοντα μη ειναι ηλιον, εργον χειρων αυτου υπαρχοντα, εκ ισχυουσιν εις ακινας ανιοφθαλμησαι. § v.

" make

" make us alive ; let us believe that the Son of LETTER
 " God had no power to suffer had it not been for EIGHTH.
 " us *." And again, " Mean while thou hast
 " [the whole doctrine] concerning the majesty of
 " Christ ; how all things were made for him and
 " through him ; to whom be honour, power, and
 " glory, now and for ever †." He who penned
 these sentences was surely a devout believer in our
 Lord's divinity. It is needless to observe, that he
 was a Christian ; and almost as needless to observe,
 that he had been a Jew. For in that age none but
 a person bred in Judaism could possess that minute
 knowledge of the Jewish rites, which is displayed
 in this book. In the writer therefore of the epistle
 of St. Barnabas, we have one instance of a Hebrew
 Christian of the apostolic age, who believed in our
 Lord's divinity.

But this is not all. They must have been ori-
 ginally Jews to whom this epistle was addressed.
 The discourse supposes them well acquainted
 with the Jewish rites, which are the chief subject
 of it : and indeed to any not bred in Judaism the
 book had been uninteresting and unintelligible.
 They were Hebrew Christians therefore, to whom
 a brother of the circumcision holds up the doc-
 trine of our Lord's divinity. He upholds it, not
 barely as his own persuasion, but as an article of
 their common faith. He brings no arguments to
 prove it—he employs no rhetoric to recommend it.
 He mentions it as occasion occurs, without shew-
 ing any anxiety to inculcate it, or any apprehen-

* ——— εἰ ἐν ὁ υἱὸς τῆ θεῶ, ὡν Κύριος, καὶ μελλῶν κρίνειν
 ζωνίας καὶ νεκρῶς, ἐπαθεν, ἵνα ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς ζωοποιήσῃ ἡμᾶς·
 πιστεύσωμεν, ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τῆ θεῶ ἔκ ἐδυνατο παθεῖν, εἰ μὴ διὰ ἡμᾶς.
 § vii.

† Habes interim de majestate Christi, quo modo omnia
 in illum et per illum facta sunt : cui sit honor, virtus, gloria
 nunc et in sæcula sæculorum. § xvii.

LETTER EIGHTH. sion, that it would be denied or doubted. He mentions it in that unhesitating language, which implies that the public opinion stood with his own. So that in this writer we have not only an instance of an Hebrew Christian, of the apostolic age, holding the doctrine of our Lord's divinity; but in the book we have the clearest evidence, that this was the common faith of the Hebrew Christians of that age, or in other words, of the primitive church of Jerusalem.

This, Sir, is the proof, which I had to produce of the consent of that church with the later Gentile churches in this great article. It is so direct and full, though it lies in a narrow compass, that if this be laid in the one scale, and your whole mass of evidence drawn, from incidental and ambiguous allusions in the other,

“ The latter will fly up, and kick the beam ”

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER NINTH.

the proof of the orthodoxy of the first age overturns Dr. Priestley's arguments from Hegesippus and Justin Martyr—Hegesippus, a voucher for the trinitarian faith—Dr. Priestley's own principles set aside his interpretation of Justin Martyr—Dr. Priestley himself gives it up.—Tertullian makes no acknowledgement of any popularity of the Unitarian tenets in his own time.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE it is proved of the first Christians of the LETTER
NINTH.
circumcision, that they were believers in our Lord's divinity; what becomes of your two arguments to the contrary from Hegesippus and Justin Martyr?

The argument from Hegesippus rested on a presumption, that Hegesippus himself was an Unitarian. That Hegesippus himself was an Unitarian was presumed, because he was a Christian of the Hebrews, and the Christians of the Hebrews were supposed to be generally of that persuasion. But now that the reverse is proved of the Hebrew Christians, the presumption must be reversed concerning Hegesippus. Hegesippus must be deemed no Unitarian, and all consequences deduced from the contrary supposition must be reversed, or at least they will vanish.

You remark indeed that Hegesippus, enumerating the heresies of his times, makes no mention
of

LETTER NINTH. of the Ebionæan*." But this, I suppose, is mentioned only as a circumstance, that might seem to corroborate the inference from the supposed prevalence of the Ebionæan tenets in the antient Hebrew church, if that supposition might be allowed to stand. It will hardly be pretended, that this circumstance alone will amount to a proof, that Hegesippus was a dissenter from what hath been shewn to be the prevailing opinion of his church. Of the five books of his Ecclesiastical Commentaries nothing more survives than a few sentences, cited by Eusebius in different parts of his history, which brought altogether might perhaps fill two pages and a half in a folio of a middling size. In these fragments no mention occurs of the Ebionæan heresy. Is it therefore to be concluded that the Ebionites were not mentioned, or not mentioned as Heretics, in the entire work? Or where is the cogency of this argument? In certain fragments of the work of Hegesippus the Ebionites are not mentioned as Heretics, therefore the author was himself an Ebionite.

Scanty as these fragments are, Providence hath so ordered, that clear evidence is to be found in them that Hegesippus was no Ebionite, and that his testimony is to be found in them in favour of the catholic faith. That he was no Ebionite appears with the highest evidence from a little circumstance incidentally mentioned by Eusebius, which those who only *look through* antient writers might be very apt to overlook. Eusebius relates, that Hegesippus cited the Proverbs of Solomon, by a title which implied his acknowledgement of the

* History of Corruptions, vol. I, p. 8. and vol. II. p. 486. Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 8. Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 143.

book †: whereas the Ebionites acknowledged no part of the Old Testament but the Pentateuch, nor the whole of that. His testimony in favour of the Catholic faith is contained in his declaration “that he found in all the churches which he visited in his journey to Rome, that faith maintained which was agreeable to the law, the prophets, and the doctrine of our Lord ‡.” Hegesippus, in this declaration, bears his testimony to the faith of all the churches at this time, that it was the faith which Christ had taught. But what faith the churches at this time maintained, let Irenæus and Justin testify: and where is the Unitarian, who will have the forehead to affirm, that the faith, described as the faith catholic by Irenæus and by Justin, was any other than the Trinitarian?

So much for Hegesippus. Now for Justin Martyr, your argument from his supposed apology for his own opinions as contrary to the general and prevailing, rests on a particular interpretation of certain expressions, which in themselves perhaps are not free from ambiguity. But this interpretation, Sir, rests on your assumption, that the first Christians were Unitarian. This being now disproved, I will reason against your interpretation from your own principles, and, with little variation, in your own words; and from the contrary interpretation I will deduce the contrary conclusion.

Justin wrote you know, “about the year 140; i. e. about 80 years after the time of the apostles §.” If we consider the state of opinions in their time “we can hardly doubt, whether Justin asserts it or not, that the doctrine of our

† Euseb. Ecc. Hist. lib. iv. c. 22.

‡ Ibid.

§ Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 17.

“Lord’s

LETTER " *Lord's divinity* * *must* have been the prevailing
NINTH. " one in his time †." For we have certain evi-
dence ‡, that it was the opinion of the church in
the age of the apostles; and it is not likely, that so
important a doctrine should be generally abandoned
" in so short a time as fourscore years §. And if
" we take in another well authenticated circum-
" stance, we shall be obliged to reduce this short
" space to one still shorter. Hegesippus says
" —that the church of Jerusalem continued a
" virgin, or free from heresy till the death of Si-
" meon, who succeeded James the Just, that is,
" till the time of Trajan ||, or about the year 100
" or perhaps 110.—Knowing therefore (*from*
" *another evidence that of Barnabas*) what this pu-
" rity of Christian faith was, and what Hegesip-
" pus must have known it to be, we have only
" the space of 40, or perhaps 30 years, for so
" great a change. So rapid at that particular pe-
" riod must have been that movement, which we
" find by experience to be naturally one of the
" very slowest in the whole system of nature, viz.
" the revolution of opinions in great bodies of
" men. Can it then be thought probable, that
" the generality either of Jewish or Gentile Chris-
" tians, or of both considered as one body, the
" οἱ πλείστοι, should have abandoned the doctrine
" of *our Lord's divinity* ** in the time of Justin
" Martyr ††". Certainly not. The words there-
fore εἰς αὐτὸν οἱ πλείστοι λαύλα μοι δοξασάντες εἶποιεν could
not be intended to convey the sense, which you and

* Dr. Priestley's words are *the simple humanity of Christ*.

† Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 17.

‡ See my last Letter.

§ Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 17.

|| Euseb. Ecc. Hist. lib. 3. c. 32.

** Dr. Priestley's words are *the simple humanity of Christ*.

†† Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 18, 19.

your

your vindicator would impose upon them. On the contrary they must be understood as an assertion, or at least as an insinuation, that the opinion of our Lord's meer humanity was generally condemned. LETTER
NINTH.

I once thought to have entered minutely into every part of the argument, which you and your vindicator have framed from this passage of Justin. But I find myself excused from that task by your candid acknowledgement, in the sixth article of your postscript, that you are influenced in your construction of this passage by your own particular opinions; "and that another person, having a different persuasion concerning the state of opinions in that age, will naturally be inclined to put a different construction upon it*." A passage which may bear one or another construction, according to the previous persuasions of the reader, can be of little avail on either side. You are welcome to all the proof of that sort, which you will take the trouble to amass. You seem, Sir, not insensible of its insignificance. Perceiving at last, that the expressions of Justin, when you have made the most of them, are but ambiguous, you are inclined to lay but little stress upon the passage. You resume the consideration of it, with a declaration that you are not "solicitous about trifles†." I must remark however, that expressions, which in themselves might be very ambiguous, may receive a definite sense from the known history of the writer's times. This is the case in this passage of Justin. His words considered by themselves are ambiguous: but connected with the opinions of the writer and of his age, they afford a decisive testimony against you.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 130.

† Ibid. p. 127.

LETTER
NINTH.

But you think, if Justin Martyr and Hegesippus fail, you have still the positive testimony of Tertullian to oppose to my conclusions from the faith of the first Christians. Tertullian, who was little younger than Justin, complains that in his time the Unitarian doctrine was the general persuasion. "The simple, the ignorant, and the unlearned, who are always a great part of the body of Christians, because the rule of faith transfers their worship of many Gods to the one true God, not understanding that the unity of God is to be maintained, but with the œconomy my, dread this œconomy *." I must confess, sir, here seems to be a complaint against the unlearned Christians as in general unfavourable to the Trinitarian doctrine. But the complaint is of your own raising. Tertullian will vouch but for a very small part of it. "Simple persons †, says Tertullian (not to call them ignorant and ideots) who always make the majority of believers, because the rule of faith itself carries us away from the many gods of the heathen to the one true God, not understanding that one God is indeed to be believed, but with an œconomy (or arrangement) of the Godhead, startle at the œconomy. They take it for granted, that the number and disposition of the Trinity is a division of the Unity. They pretend that two, and even three are preached by us, and imagine that they themselves are the worshippers of one God. We, they say, *bold the monarchy*. Latins have

* Hist. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 55.

† Simpliciter enim (nec dixerim imprudentes et idiotæ) quæ major semper credentium pars est, quoniam et ipsa regula fidei, a pluribus diis sæculi, &c. non intelligentes unicum quidem, sed cum suâ œconomiâ credendum, expavescunt ad œconomiam.

" caught

“ caught up the word *monarchia*, Greeks will not
 “ understand *œconomia*.” Let the author’s words
 be thus exactly rendered, and you will find in them
 neither complaint, nor acknowledgement, of a ge-
 neral prevalence of the Unitarian doctrine among
 Christians of any rank. Tertullian alleges, that
 what credit it obtained was only with the illiterate:
 nor with all the illiterate, but with those only, who
 were ignorant and stupid in the extreme. To pre-
 clude the plea of numbers, he remarks that the il-
 literate will always make the majority of believers.
 “ Some simple people, he says, take alarm at the
 “ notion of a plurality of persons in the unity of
 “ the Godhead. Simple people said I! I should
 “ have said, ignorant and dull, who have never
 “ been made to comprehend the true sense of the
 “ apostles creed; which speaks of one God, in
 “ opposition only to a plurality of independent
 “ Gods worshipped by the heathen, without any
 “ respect to the metaphysical unity of the Deity.
 “ When it is considered, that persons of mean en-
 “ dowments must always be the majority of a
 “ body, collected, as the church is, from all ranks
 “ of men; it were no wonder, if the followers of
 “ the Unitarian preachers were more numerous
 “ than they really are.” This, Sir, is the natural
 exposition of the passage, which you cite as Ter-
 tullian’s testimony of the popularity of your fa-
 vourite opinions in his own time. It is no such
 testimony. It is a charge of ignorance against your
 party; of such ignorance as would invalidate the
 plea of numbers, if that plea could be set up.
 The argument which you build upon the rank and
 condition of Tertullian’s Unitarians, who were
 common or unlearned people, can be of no force,
 unless it could be proved, that the Unitarian opi-
 nion was general in this rank of Christians. The

LETTER
NINTH.

common people, who will be the last to depart from the opinions of their ancestors, when they are left to themselves; will on the other hand be the first to be staggered with difficulties, and, for that reason, the first to be misledde. Whatever therefore might be the novelty of the Unitarian doctrine in the age of Tertullian, it is no wonder that it should find admirers among the most ignorant and stupid of the common people.

You must search, Sir, for some clearer testimony, than any that is to be found in Tertullian, Justin Martyr, or the few surviving fragments of Hegesippus, to oppose to my proof from the Epistle of St. Barnabas.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER TENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's third letter, in which he would prove that the primitive Unitarians were not deemed Heretics—His arguments from Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, confuted by the Monthly Reviewers—The insufficiency of Dr. Priestley's reply—The arguments from Clemens Alexandrinus, and from Jerome confuted.

DEAR SIR,

IT should seem, that you have some secret mis-
 trust in your own heart of the proof which you
 pretend to bring, that the Unitarian doctrine was
 orthodoxy in the first age; or you would have been
 less solicitous to shew, that the primitive Unitari-
 ans were not deemed Heretics. For a proof that
 confessed orthodoxy was not deemed heresy, or in
 other words, that the orthodox did never excom-
 municate themselves, might have been spared. This
 however is the subject of your third letter. Your
 arguments from the apostles creed, as it is stated by
 Tertullian*; from the little severity with which
 Irenæus speaks of the Ebionites†; and from the
 respect with which Justin Martyr treats those blas-
 phemers‡, for that is the appellation by which
 his regard for them is expressed, have been already
 so completely answered by my good and able ally§

LETTER
TENTH.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 27, 28. † — p. 32. ‡ — p. 31.

§ "Dr. Horsley considers this writer as learned in ecclesi-
 cal history, and may wish to have him for an ally." Pre-
 face to Letters to Dr. H. p. xxi.

the

LETTER the Monthly Reviewer*, that little is left for me to
TENTH. say upon the subject.

I must take this occasion to declare, that you are perfectly right in your conjecture †, that I entertain a high opinion of that Gentleman's learning in Ecclesiastical History. Indeed my opinion of his learning hath been gradually rising, while yours hath been going down ‡: and what you predicted is at last come to pass; I think myself happy in the alliance of that able Critic. I am informed by your last publication ||, that my valuable ally is the Rev. Mr. Samuel Badcock, a dissenting minister at South Molton, in Devonshire. Whether the information be exact, it is not to my purpose to enquire. To whatever denomination of Christians my worthy fellow-labourer may belong, he is a learned and an able advocate of the faith which was at first delivered to the Saints, and his alliance will not be disgracefull, though he chooses to fight in a reviewer's armour. Indeed I cannot see for what reason the alliance of a Christian divine, although he were a reviewer by profession (I have my doubts, whether the reputed Mr. Badcock comes within that description) but upon the supposition that he comes within it, I cannot see why his alliance should be less creditable than that, which you, Sir, so obsequiously court, with Jew, Turk, Heretic, and Infidel. You seem to think it unfair, that your antagonist should avail himself of the prodigious advantage, which the review gives him, of a cheap and immense circulation ¶. This complaint, Sir, really comes with an ill grace from you, who are

* In the Monthly Review for January 1784.

† See note (§).

‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 159.

|| Remarks on the Monthly Review of the Letters to Dr. Horsley, &c.

¶ Preface to the Letters to Dr. H. p. xxi.

every day diffusing your dangerous doctrines among the common people, in pamphlets published for their benefit in an ordinary form, to be purchased at the easy price of sixpence, a groat, and even twopence. Some reserve on our part might be proper, if any were observed on yours. But while you invite the most illiterate of the laity to take a part in the dispute, it is our duty to guard them, what we can, from seduction; to take advantage of every mode of cheap and general circulation, that the antidote may be as widely spread, and as easy to be had, as the medicated phials.— I return to my subject.

Justin Martyr's respect for the unitarians of his time, you collect from certain passages, in which, speaking of heretics with the highest indignation, he makes no allusion, as you conceive, to the unitarians. My learned ally replies*, that in one of these passages Justin Martyr expressly alludes to the Unitarians, under the very honourable character of blasphemers of Christ, whose coming had been announced by the Prophets. He remarks, that in this passage Justin couples the name of Christ with the title of "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," in a manner, which, as it must bring to every learned reader's recollection other passages of the holy martyr's writings, in which Christ and the God of Abraham are described as the very same person, clearly defines the particular blasphemy, which was the subject of the accusation. My learned ally complains, that your translation of this passage is so *managed*, as to conceal this allusion to the unitarian heresy; and to convey "no idea of distinction between the Maker of the world and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." He might have added another com-

* Monthly Review for January 1784, p. 61, 62.

plaint;

LETTER
TENTH.

plaint; that in your translation you have suppressed another clause in the same period, in which certain persons are treated with great severity, "who, instead of worshipping Jesus" [instead of paying him divine worship, for that is proper force of the verb *σεβειν*] "confessed him only in name." Your reply* is indeed very extraordinary. It consists of three parts. An apology for the omissions; a defence of your argument; a flat denial †, that you have made the omissions, for which however you have condescended to apologize.

Your apology is, that the omissions were made to *shorten a long Greek quotation* ‡. But, Sir, the omissions are in your English translation; and the Greek, which is given at length at the bottom of your page, is nothing shortened by them. If the passage was to be shortened, either in Greek or in English, why was this shortening effected by the omission of those clauses in particular, which might seem at least adverse to your argument? Your defence is, that the omitted passages affect not the argument either way. For the whole of Mr. Badcock's remark is answered you say at once ||, by observing, "that it is to no sort of purpose, who it was that Justin meant by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: but who it was, that the heretics he is speaking of meant by the person so described, and whom they meant to blaspheme; and this certainly was not Jesus Christ but another being, the supposed maker of the world, the author of the Jewish dispensation, and the introducer of much evil, which they said Christ was sent to rectify." Sir, I apprehend, and my learned ally,

* Remarks on the Monthly Review of the Letters to Dr. Horsley, sect. I.

† Appendix to the Remarks.

‡ Remarks, p. 14.

|| Remarks, p. 13.

I believe will be of the same opinion, that the ^{LETTER} true, not the supposed maker of the world was the ^{TENTH.} person blasphemed, by the introduction of the fabulous *Demiurgus* of the Gnostics. Of the same opinion was Justin. You cannot, Sir, know so little of his language as to imagine, that by the title of ποιητης των ολων, *the Maker of the Universe*, he describes the Gnostic *Demiurgus*, not the true Creator, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But how is it that you maintain, that Jesus Christ was not blasphemed, by those whom Justin accuses? Justin describes those whom he would accuse, as blasphemers of Jesus Christ. This is in part the matter of his accusation. That you should attempt to deny it is extraordinary, Sir; when you confess, that you omitted it "to shorten." It appears however, that your argument rests entirely upon a supposition, that the blasphemy of Jesus was no part of Justin's accusation. You took therefore that method of shortening, which might best serve your purpose.

But you insist, that "they were Gnostics only, "not unitarian Christians, that Justin was reflecting upon or alluding to*." Sir, will you take upon you to define on whom Justin would reflect, in contradiction to Justin's own declaration. I think with you, that the phrase *αλλοι γαρ κα' αλλον τροπον* is distributive; introducing, not the mention of any new sect, but a specific enumeration of the sects which had been already mentioned, under the general description of "those who taught "men to say and to do many impious and blasphemous things." But the force of the objection, which my learned ally hath brought against your argument, depends not on the exact sense of this phrase. It is sufficient for our purpose, that a

* Remarks, p. 13.

LETTER
TENTH.

blasphemy of Christ, by denying his divinity, and refusing to honour him with divine worship, is a part of Justin's description of the heresies to which he alludes. Whence it is manifest, that his reflections allude to other heretics beside the Gnostics; unless indeed you will choose to say, that some of the Gnostics had a principal share in this unitarian blasphemy: which, if you should affirm, you will in me have no antagonist. It is indeed my opinion, that the Cerinthian Gnostics were the first who denied the divinity of our Lord. Cerinthus was much earlier than Ebion; and Ebion, in his notions of the redeemer, seems to have been a meer Cerinthian. But if you concur with me in these opinions, it is little to your purpose to insist, that Justin Martyr's reflections are levelled only at the Gnostics; since in the Gnostics, according to this view of their opinions, he censures the unitarians. If you deny, that our Lord's meer humanity was a doctrine maintained by any branch of the Gnostics; still Justin expressly censures the unitarians. If the Ebionites are not mentioned by name, are you sure they are not included among the [ἄλλοι ἄλλῳ ὀνόματι] "others of various denominations," thus generally mentioned after an enumeration of the principal Gnostic sects. The Ebionæan heresy was at this time in its infancy, and probably too inconsiderable to deserve particular notice.

Such, Sir, is your apology for your omission, and such is your defence of your argument. After this apology, and after this defence, comes in your appendix a flat denial of the omissions, for which you have apologized. A friend has told you, that the passage of Justin is entire and in its proper place in your letters to me, page 31*. It is true, Sir, the passage is entire in the Greek in the mar-

* Appendix to Remarks.

gin of your book. But has your friend told you, LETTER
TENTH. that it is entire in your translation? My learned ally complains, and indeed, Sir, with too much reason, that you write for the unlearned. The entire passage, as long as it appears not in your translation, lay innocently enough in the Greek at the bottom of your page.

To your argument from the Apostle's creed, as recited by Tertullian *, it might, Sir, be a sufficient reply, that Jesus Christ is mentioned in it as the Son of God; a title which, in the sense in which it was constantly expounded and understood, reprobates the unitarian heresy. But my learned ally refers you † to another creed, produced by Tertullian in the book *De Præscriptione*, &c. in which the divinity of Christ is more explicitly asserted. This you say is not simply a creed, but an exposition of the creed ‡, and "expresses no more than "Tertullian's own faith §." Tertullian himself, Sir, was of another opinion. He calls this exposition a rule of faith appointed by Christ. He says, it "expressed the general faith which was disputed "by none but heretics." After this, Sir, will you say, that "Tertullian did not consider unitarians "as excluded from the name and assemblies of "Christians ||."

Clemens Alexandrinus, who makes frequent mention of heretics, hath been very silent, you think, about the Ebionites. Hence, you seem desirous to infer, that Clemens thought them not heretical. Almost the whole, these are your words, "Almost the whole of his seventh book of "*Stromata* relate to that subject [heresies]. He "mentions fourteen different heresiarchs by name,

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 27, 28.

† Monthly-Review for January 1784, p. 60.

‡ Remarks, &c. p. 18.

§ Ibid. p. 21.

|| Letters to Dr. H. p. 27.

LETTER. "and ten heresies by character: but none of them
TENTH. "bear any relation to the Ebionites or any species
"of unitarians*." Indeed, Sir, it was not without reason, that I complained, in my former publication, of the peculiarities of your style. I hope, that the great work which you are preparing, upon the subject of our present controversy, will be accompanied with a glossary, to explain the words of the English language, upon which you shall be pleased to impose new senses: and that in particular you will not omit to inform your readers, how much of a thing may be meant by the *WHOLE* in your new phraseology.

I find, Sir, by the best computation I can form upon a simple example, which I am sensible must be liable to great inaccuracies, I speak therefore under the correction of your authoritative decision—but by the best computation I can form, the *WHOLE* may be any part of a thing not less than a forty-eighth. I beg your pardon—I had written this, when turning back to the errata, at the beginning of your book, I there find, that you have been yourself very properly shocked at the extravagant hyperbolism of your own expressions; and for the words *almost the whole*, you advise your reader to substitute these, *a great part*. Sir, a reluctant and imperfect retraction is more unseemly than the first error, be it ever so enormous. If you would not be thought to impose upon your reader's ignorance, or to presume upon his inattention, you must correct again; and for *a great* bid him read *a very little part*. The seventh book of the *Stromata*, in Sylburgius's edition, which I use as most convenient for my present purpose, because the pages, not encumbered with notes, all contain equal quantities of text: in this edition the seventh book, Greek

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 118.

and Latin, fills 48 pages. The general subject of the book is the excellence of Christian Knowledge in preference to Philosophy. This argument fills more than 38 pages of the 48, that is, more than three-fourths of the whole book, without any mention of heretics. Then the author answers an objection to the certainty of Christian knowledge, taken from the differences of opinion that subsisted among the different sects. This introduces a general invective against heretics, and a dissuasive of heresy, drawn from general topics, not from the enormities of particular sects; which fills 8 pages more. The dissuasive of heresy leads to an argument for the authority of the Church upon the footing of antiquity: and this introduces the names of some remarkable heresies, which are mentioned for no other purpose, but to shew that the very denominations, which they bore, argued a late origin, singularity of opinion, and separation from a more antient society. This list, with many interspersed remarks upon the origin of each sect, and assertions of the unity of the true church, fills perhaps three-fourths of one of the two remaining pages of the book: for the last page is taken up with a whimsical explanation of the Levitical marks of clean and unclean beasts; which are supposed to be types of the good and bad qualities of true Christians and of heretics. Thus it appears that that great part of the seventh book of the *Stromata*, which you had well nigh mistaken for the whole, is somewhat less than one part in forty-eight.

But the Ebionites have no place in that long list of heretics, which occupies almost the whole, or, to speak more accurately, a great part, or, to speak exactly, almost a forty-eighth part of the seventh book of the *Stromata* *. I think indeed they have

LETTER
TENTH.

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 118.

not,

LETTER
TENTH.

not, unless they be included, which I suspect may be the case, among the Peratic heretics. But I will grant that they are omitted. Is it, Sir, a consequence, that Clemens thought their opinions indifferent? I cannot see the necessity of this conclusion, unless indeed it had been of importance to the argument of Clemens, that he should make an exact enumeration of all the sects, which he deemed heretical. But this was not the case. A few instances sufficed for the illustration of his reasoning; and these, in a discussion with Greek philosophers, he would naturally select from those heresies, which, for something of subtlety and refinement in their doctrine, were the most likely to have attracted the notice of the Gentiles. A sect, which lived in obscurity in the North of Galilee, of no consideration for number, learning, or abilities, was likely to be the last that he would mention.

It is another circumstance which you urge, Sir, in favour of the early unitarians, that it is confessed by Jerom, that the Ebionites were anathematized, not for their unitarian opinions, but for their rigid adherence to the Mosaic law * — *propter hoc solum à patribus anathematizati sunt, quòd legis ceremonias Christi evangelio miscuerunt.*

I shall frankly confess, Sir, that if nothing more were known either of the Ebionites or Cerinthians, from ecclesiastical history, than what might be gathered from this sentence of Jerom, I should be apt to conclude, that the single error of either sect was this; that they judaised. The words however are capable of another meaning; namely, that the Judaic superstition was a thing so criminal in the judgement of the primitive Christians, as to constitute *by itself* one very sufficient reason for the excommunication of the sects, which were addicted

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 34.

to it. For it is to be observed, that the Ebionites ^{LETTER} are coupled in this passage with the Cerinthians. ^{TENTH.} It is said of both, that "for this single thing they were anathematized, that they mixed the ceremonies of the law, with the gospel of Christ." This being said of both without distinction, must be said of either in some sense in which it may be true of both: and if it acquits the Ebionites of heresy, except in the single article of their judaism, it equally acquits the Cerinthians. If it is to be concluded from these expressions of Jerom, that to deny our Lord's divinity was no heresy in the Ebionites, it is equally to be concluded from these same expressions, that to deny that God was the creator of the universe, was no heresy in the Cerinthians. If this passage of Jerom is no testimony in favour of the Cerinthian doctrine about the creation, it is no testimony in favour of the Ebionæan doctrine about our Lord. It is lame and defective, like every other testimony which you have produced to the same purpose; and your opinion, that the Primitive unitarians were not considered as heretics, I must still, Sir, in defiance of all your testimonies, take the liberty to place among the extravagant assertions of Daniel Zuicker, of which Simon Episcopus was the charitable but insufficient advocate.

I am, &c.

P. S. You are pleased, Sir, to say in the conclusion of your third Letter, that the unitarian doctrine, even in its most obnoxious form, existed in the very time of the Apostles. I deny that the unitarian doctrine existed at that time in the most obnoxious form. Produce your indisputable evidence. Observe that by the most obnoxious form, I understand that form, which excludes the worship of Christ.

LETTER

LETTER ELEVENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's fourth, in which he defends his argument from a passage in Athanasius.—The sense of the words αἰνὰ ἐκλογος mistaken by Dr. Priestley—The sense of the word σωσις mistaken by Dr. Priestley—Prudence and Caution not synonymous—The matter of fact, as represented by Athanasius, mistaken by Dr. Priestley—His grammatical argument refuted.—That Athanasius speaks of unconverted Jews proved from a comparison of the two clauses in which Jews are mentioned.—The Gentiles not uninterested in questions about the Messiah.—Of deference to authorities,

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
XI.

A SUPPOSED testimony of Athanasius made a principal branch of your original proof, that the faith of the first Christians was Unitarian; and this, with other principal branches of your proof, found a place among my specimens of your evidence, of which it was the third in order. For this testimony of Athanasius, you refer your reader to Athanasius's defence of the Alexandrine Dionysius, where you think you find a confession of two very important circumstances; that the apostles used great caution in divulging the doctrine of the proper divinity of Christ; and that the occasion of this caution was the prevalency of a contrary persuasion among the first Hebrew Christians.

In opposition to this, I took upon me to assure the reverend assembly which I had the honour to address, that no mention of the caution of the apostles, or of the heterodoxy of the first Jewish Christ-

Christians, is to be found in the defence of Dionysius—I believe I might have added, in any part of the writings of Athanasius. LETTER XI.

You have now, Sir, in your fourth letter, produced the passage, from the defence of Dionysius, in which you conceive that these important secrets are betrayed. This passage, you say, you “only abridged before *.” (I am sorry, Sir, to remind you, that the manner in which your abridgments are managed, has appeared in other instances). You abridged it before, but now you “give a larger portion of it at full length:” not the whole, by your own confession; “for the whole is much too long to transcribe.” Pardon me, Sir, if I add, that the whole, were it transcribed, would justify the summary which I have given of it in my Charge: it would prove, that the example of the apostles is alleged for the purpose which I assign, and in the manner which I mention: it would prove therefore that this “larger portion,” which you have given “at full length,” is nothing to your purpose. But to bring the matter to a short issue, I will set the general scope of the discourse quite out of the question. I will take the particular portion, which you have produced, by itself, as you desire it should be taken: and I will shew, that even thus taken it will give no support to your assertions, without a singular construction of certain words and phrases, which cannot be admitted.

The apostles, it is said, spake of Christ as a man; a man of Nazareth; a man obnoxious to sufferings. Was it that the apostles were in the sentiments of Arius? No such thing. “But this they did as wise master-builders and stewards of the mysteries of God; and they had this specious pretence

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 39:

LETTER
XI.

“ for it—— +.” Stop, Sir, a moment. What do I hear? A specious pretence for it! For what? For doing as wise master-builders and stewards of the mysteries of God. Are specious pretences needed then for wise conduct? Or were the apostles men to make pretences? Surely this is the language of Dr. Priestley, not of Athanasius. He thought more reverently of the apostles. Let him speak for himself. καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ἔχουσιν εὐλογον. Is *pretence* the sense of αἰτία? The true Greek word for *pretence* is προφασις. And even had this word been used, the adjective εὐλογος would have carried it away from that base meaning, which is inseparable from the English words *specious pretence*. For εὐλογος is not *specious* in the English sense. It may be applied to any thing *in quo species cernitur honesti*, but it is not meer seeming. Had Athanasius meant to say, that the apostles had a specious pretence only for their conduct, the adjective must have been πιθανος. He must have laid, καὶ προφασιν τινα ἔσχον πιθανην. Or, καὶ ἐκ ἀπιθανον τινα ἔσχον προφασιν.

The word αἰτία hath two principal senses; a philosophical and a popular. Either of the two may suit this place. Amongst the philosophers it signifies a cause, in any one of the four kinds of causes; the material, the efficient, the formal, or the final. Hence it comes to signify a motive, motives being final causes considered in their relation to the mind of a rational agent. Thus Plato, speaking of the Creator's motive for a particular arrangement of the heavenly bodies, τα δ' ἄλλα, οἱ δὲ καὶ δι' αἵ Αἰτίαις ἰδρυσαίτο, εἰτις ἐπεξιοι πασας, &c. *in Timæo*. Again, δια δὲ τῷ Αἰτίαν καὶ τὸν λογισμὸν τούδε ἐν ὅλῳ ἐξ ἀπάντων——ἐτεκλήνατο. *in Timæo*. A motive may be either good or bad, but αἰτία εὐλογος can

be only good. It must be a wise and honourable LETTER
XI.
motive; or, in plain English, *a good reason*.

Αἰτία, in the rhetorical or popular sense, answers to the English word *cause* in its forensic meaning. It signifies an action or suit at law, or a criminal indictment. In this sense *αἰτία εὐλογος* is a cause fairly defensible, upon a just and honourable plea. I am inclined to prefer this sense of the word in this place, because the verb *ἔχουσι* is in the present time, when the preceding and the following are in past. "If the conduct of the apostles should be at any time questioned, they have a fair and substantial plea." This may still be expressed in English by *a good reason*. This therefore is the proper English phrase to convey the holy father's meaning, whether *αἰτία* be taken in its philosophical or in its popular sense.

Now, Sir, if for *specious pretence* you will be pleased to substitute *good reason*, you will find that this passage, even in your own translation, will afford no ground for the inferences you would build upon it. Athanasius proceeds to shew what this good reason was, and he commends the great sagacity which was displayed in the conduct of the apostles.

The deficiencies of your translation, I must however confess, are abundantly compensated in your comment. "I now have produced the passage, you say, and have pointed out a word, viz. *συνεσις*, which, in the connection in which it stands can bear no other sense than caution, and great caution; *μετὰ πολλῆς συνεσεως* — *." Sir, may I ask in what lexicon (you must excuse me if I suspect that you are used to take the senses of Greek words from ordinary lexicons) in what lexicon, good or bad, have you found that *συνεσις*, in any

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 45.

LETTER
XI.

connection may stand for *caution*? It is literally the meeting or coming together of different things; and applied to the mind, it is properly that faculty, or that act of the mind, by which it brings things together, and compares them, and forms a ready judgment of fitnesses and incongruities. It is expounded by the antient Greek lexicographers, who best understood their own language, to be the "knowledge of comparables and incomparables; " or a ready following of the mind quickly bringing together the notions of things, readily discovering what is proper and befitting to each*." Plato says more concisely, συνιεναι means that the mind goes along with things†. *Sagacity* is the English word, which most nearly renders the same idea. *Prudence*, the word which you have used in your translation, may be born, but the idea, which it gives, is rather similar than the same. You have shewn, you say, "from the whole tenor of the discourse, " that Athanasius could have intended nothing " else than to describe their prudence or extreme " caution‡." *Prudence or extreme caution*! Do you really think, Sir, that prudence and caution in the English language are synonymous? If that be your opinion, I must beg that one or both of these words may go into the glossary||, and be declared equivalent. *Caution* is indeed sometimes used abusively for *discretion*: but in its proper sense it carries with it the notion of some dishonest art: and caution, in a teacher or disputant, always denotes an artful provision by some dishonest reserve for the success of doctrine or of argument. In the present case, if you use the word without affixing to it the notion of concealment, it will not serve your purpose. But nothing of concealment is

* See Phavorinus.

† In Cratylus.

‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 45.

|| See p. 85.

implied in the Greek word. Athanasius extolls the sagacity of the apostles; their caution he never mentions. LETTER
XI.

Still you will insist that he describes the thing, though he may not have called it by its proper name. "He evidently, you say, does not represent them as deferring the communication of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, on account of its being more conveniently taught afterwards, as part of a system of faith; but only lest it should have given offence to the Jews*." I cannot read this sentence without astonishment, when I turn back to the quotation, and find that you have fairly produced the passage, in which Athanasius, in your own translation as well as in the original, affirms that what related to our Lord's humanity was taught *first*, for no other reason, but that the doctrine of his divinity might be taught *afterwards* with more effect. The desire of instructing the Jews, not the fear of offending them, was the motive with the apostles for propounding first what was the easiest to be understood, and the most likely to be admitted.

But whatever the motive may have been with the apostles, for their conduct, you insist that the fact was, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not divulged by them: and of this you think you find a proof in this passage of Athanasius: in which you think it is confessed, that the apostles in the opening of their ministry were very reserved upon this article; and you observe, and I think not improperly, that the reasons for that reserve (if they ever subsisted) would operate till within a short time of the dispersion and death of the apostles. Whence you conclude, that if ever they divulged this doctrine, it must have been at so late a period, that

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 45.

LETTER
XI.

the church, in consequence of their former silence upon the subject, must have been fixed in the contrary persuasion†.”

But what if the foundation of this whole argument should be rotten. What if the whole should be built on a misinterpretation of Athanasius. Athanasius affirms not, that the apostles, in any period of their ministry, kept the doctrine of our Lord's divinity a secret: or that they were reserved upon this or any article of faith, with those who were so far converted as to be catechumens. In their first public sermons, addressed to the unbelieving multitude, they were content to maintain, that Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, was risen from the dead; without touching his divinity otherwise than in remote allusions. But to suppose that they carried their converts no greater length, is to suppose that their private instruction was not more particular than their public. For this you will find little support in Athanasius or in Chrysostom, who is called upon to corroborate the argument from the concessions of Athanasius.

But whatever the doctrine of the apostles might be, or whatever opinion Athanasius or Chrysostom might entertain concerning it; Athanasius, it seems, acknowledges that the first Jewish Christians were Unitarians. Οἱ τότε Ἰουδαῖοι, “The Jews of that time,” or, “The then Jews” is the name, by which the persons are described, who are said to have holden the erroneous belief of the meer humanity of the Messiah. Now, Sir, if “The then Jews,” Οἱ τότε Ἰουδαῖοι, may denote Jewish Christians, will you be pleased to inform me, what more precise expressions the holy father might have found in the whole compass of the Greek language, to denote genuine Jewish Jews, had he had occasion to

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 42—44.

mention them? But the verbs, it seems "in that LETTER
XI.
 " part of the passage which mentions *Christ being*
 " *come of the seed of David*, and the word *being*
 " *made flesh*, are not in the *future tense* †. In this
 remark, Sir, I cannot but admire the singular
caution of the expression. "The verbs——are
 " not in the future tense." It is true, they are
 not. But the most important of these verbs, in
 that part of the passage which mentions the Mes-
 siah's coming, although it be not in the future
 form, carries a future signification. It is in the
 infinitive mood of the present tense; which often
 denotes an instant futurity, but never denotes
 time either long since or just now past. This
 obtains in all the Greek verbs, but particu-
 larly in the verb *ἔρχομαι*, which not only by use,
 but naturally involves a notion of futurity even
 in the present tense. *ἐνόμιζον τον Χριστον ψιλου αν-*
θρωπου μονον——ἔρχεσθ. "they thought the Christ
 " was *a-coming* as a meer man only." This ex-
 pression refers to the Messiah not as come, but as
 coming. Another verb, I confess, which relates
 to the incarnation of the word, is in a preterite tense.
οὐδε οτι λογος σαρχ ἐγενετο ἐπιστευον. "neither believed
 " they, that the word *was made flesh*." *ὁ λογος σαρχ*
ἐγενετο, "the word was made flesh," these are the
 words in which St. John mentions the incarna-
 tion. The holy father, it is likely, chose to use
 the very words of the evangelist in speaking of
 this mystery; and for that reason, he may have
 sacrificed somewhat of the accuracy of his syntax
 to the exactness of his quotation. The passage
 should be printed thus. *οὐδε " οτι ὁ λογος σαρχ ἐγενετο "*
ἐπιστευον. In this grammatical argument your pru-
 dence appears not only in the very guarded ex-
 pressions, in which you have stated it; but in the
 declaration, with which it is prefaced, that you

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 42.

LETTER
XI.

desire to lay no great stress upon it. What you have respect to in this passage "is the obvious general tenour and spirit of it †." Indeed, Sir, you would do well to be cautious, upon all occasions, how you handle these briars of criticism. Let us return then to the general tenour of the passage.

You know, Sir, that Jews are twice mentioned in it. "The Jews of that age being deceived themselves and having deceived the Gentiles." And again, "——the blessed apostles——taught what related to the humanity of our Saviour to the Jews." Is it your opinion, Sir, that they are the same or different persons, who are mentioned under the name of Jews, in these two different clauses? If they are different persons, I desire to know, what circumstance or note of difference you find in the author's expressions? If you find none, on what is your opinion of a difference founded? Or not to entangle you again in grammatical disquisitions, I will for a moment suppose the persons different, and desire you to shew me, what will then be the sense or coherence of the writer's argument. If you allow that the same persons are designed in both places under the same name, I must desire you to remark that the Jews, mentioned in the second instance, were persons who were "at any rate to be persuaded (*at any rate*, that "is the force of *ὅλως*, which you have erroneously rendered by the word *fully*) at any rate to be persuaded, from the actual state of things, and from the evidence of the miracles which had been wrought, that the Christ was come §." Could these, Sir, be converted Jews? Could they be al-

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 42.

§ ἵνα ὅλως πεισθῶντες αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῶν φαινομένων καὶ γενομένων σημείων.

ready Christians, in whom this general persuasion, LETTER
XI. that the Christ was come, was yet to be wrought?

Wanting this persuasion they were clearly Jews, whose conversion was not yet begun: and of the same description, since they were indeed the very same persons, were the Jews, to whom it is imputed, that they held the erroneous belief of the Messiah's meer humanity, and that they spread the like error among the Gentiles.

But the Gentiles, you say, who were thus misledde, must have been Christian Gentiles; and by consequence the Jews, who misled them were, Jewish Christians*. But, Sir, whence is the certainty that Christian Gentiles were intended by Athanasius? It hangs upon this principle, that to any other Gentiles the whole doctrine of a Messiah must have been uninteresting†. Have you forgotten, Sir, have you never known, or would you deny, what is not denied by candid Infidels, that the expectation of a great deliverer or benefactor of mankind was universal even in the Gentile world, about the time of our Lord's appearance? If you acknowledge this, where is the improbability, that the general opinion concerning this personage should be modified by the opinions which prevailed in Judæa, which was the center of the tradition? Especially when it is considered, that the Proselytes of the gate made an easy channel of communication between the Jews and the idolatrous Gentiles. But whatever you may be disposed to grant or to deny, this argument is easily inverted, and turned against you. It hath been shewn, that none but Jew Jews can be intended by Athanasius, when he speaks of the Jews as misleaders of the Gentiles. They were Gentile Gentiles therefore who were

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 41.

† Ibid,

LETTER XI. misledde: for from unbelieving Jews Christians of the Gentiles would hardly take instruction.

Your last resource is to flee for shelter to the authority of Beaufobre. "The learned Beaufobre, a Trinitarian, and therefore an unexceptionable judge in this case, quoting this very passage does not hesitate to pronounce, that they were believing Jews, who were intended by the writer*." It is for you, Sir, to judge, what deference is due from you to the authority of Beaufobre. For my own part—I shall not affect a modesty, which I feel not—when the sense of a Greek sentence is the thing in question, if I have the writer upon my own shelf, or can find him upon my friends, it is not much my practice to stand bowing at a distance to authorities; unless indeed it be the authority of a Casaubon, a Scaliger, or a Bentley. But these men would laugh, or they would storm, at your attempts to construe Greek, with Beaufobre at your elbow. To construe Greek! I fear, Sir, they would think but lightly of your Latin erudition, after the specimen which you have given of it, in your attempt to wrest from my learned ally his strong argument for the difference, which we assert, in articles of faith between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites. The feats of criticism, which you have performed for this purpose upon certain plain words of Jerom†, to draw them from the only meaning of which they are capable, had you been a Westminster man, were enough to bring old Busby from his grave. But alas, Sir, you are not to be persuaded though one should rise from the dead. I trust our readers are persuaded, that the argument from Athanasius was with great justice and propriety placed among my specimens of insufficient proof.

I am, &c.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 42.

† Ibid. p. 152—156.

LETTER TWELFTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Fifth; in which he moves certain chronological difficulties.—Himself chiefly concerned to find the solution—His question divided—The divinity of our Lord preached from the very beginning by the Apostles.—St. Stephen a martyr to this doctrine.—His dying ejaculations justify the worship of Christ.—Christ deified in the story of St. Paul's conversion.—The divinity of Jesus acknowledged by the Apostles from the time when they acknowledged him for the Messiah.—Notions of a trinity, and of the deity of the Messiah, current among the Jews in the days of our Saviour.

DEAR SIR,

IN your fifth Letter you call upon me to assign LETTER XII.
the particular time, when the knowledge of our Lord's divinity, which, in the persuasion that the Apostles were taxed by the fathers with a reserve upon the subject, you are pleased to call "the great secret of Christ being not a meer man, but the eternal God*;" you call upon me to assign the time, when this great secret "was communicated first to the Apostles, and then by them to the body of Christians†." You "request my opinion" upon this question with a certain air of triumph, which seems to imply, that, in your apprehension, I must be much at a loss to frame an opinion upon it, which may be consistent with my creed. But the truth is, that you are yourself the person most

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 55.

† Ibid.

LETTER
XII.

concerned to find the solution. Or to express myself more accurately, the question splits into two, of which the one concerns not me, and the other concerns not either of us.

When was the doctrine of our Lord's divinity first published in the church by the Apostles?

When was the knowledge of the thing first conveyed to the minds of the Apostles themselves?

These, Sir, are two distinct questions. Of the first, it is your concern, not mine, to seek the solution. For since I have clearly traced the belief of Christ's proper deity up to the apostolic age; unless you can assign the particular epocha of the publication, I have a right to conclude, that it was a part of the very earliest doctrine. Nay, if you should even be able to assign some later time of its commencement, yet since that time must fall within the compass of the apostolic age, to which you are limited by virtue of my proof from the epistle of St. Barnabas, a question might indeed arise, which might be of difficult resolution; why was this doctrine, for a certain time, kept back? But this difficulty would not shake the credit of the doctrine. For since there is no reason to suppose, that any of the Apostles, having once received the light of inspiration, was in any future period of his life deprived of it; any doctrine published by them claims implicit credit, whatever might be the time of its first publication. A discovery that St. John had made, in the last moments of his life, had been equally to be believed, as any thing that St. Peter preached, in his first sermon on the day of pentecost. You will therefore choose your own epocha for the discovery of "the great secret." Place it, where it best may please you in the apostolic age, I will hold no argument with you upon the subject. In my own congregations I shall think it my duty to bear my witness, that from the very be-

beginning of the gospel the thing had been no secret. For proof from holy writ, I shall have recourse to those very passages of the Apostolic history, from which you draw the contrary inference. I shall remind my hearers, that in St. Peter's first public sermon, when it was reasonable to keep to the general assertion, that Jesus was the Messiah, rather than to enter into the particulars which that character might involve; allusions are nevertheless used, which discover that the mind of the speaker was strongly impressed with notions, which it was his policy to conceal. I shall particularly desire them to remark, that it is said of our Lord Jesus, that "it was not possible that he should be holden of death *." The expressions clearly imply a physical impossibility. I shall bid them observe, that the great miracle of that day is said to be an exertion of the power of Jesus exalted by God's right hand †. And I shall maintain, that the three persons are distinctly mentioned in a manner which implies the divinity of each, "Jesus—being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost ‡"—of the Father—*παρα τῆ πατρὸς*—*The Father*; the substantive, with the article prefixed, describes a person, whose character it is to be the Father. Paternity is the property, which individuates the person. But from whom is the first principle thus distinguished? From his creatures? From them he were more significantly distinguished by the name of God. Not generally therefore from his creatures, but particularly from the two other persons mentioned in the same period, Jesus and the Holy Ghost. And since this is his distinction, that he is the Father of that Son, from

LETTER
XII.

* Acts ii. vers. 24.

† Acts ii. vers. 32, 33.

‡ Ibid.

whom

LETTER whom together with himself the Holy Ghost proceeds; it follows, that the interval, between him and them, is no more than relation may create: that the whole difference lies in personal distinctions, not in essential qualities. Thus I will ever reason, Sir, for the edification of my own flock, but with little hope of your conviction, from St. Peter's first sermon.

XII.

I shall always insist, Sir, that the blessed Stephen died a martyr to the DEITY of Christ. The accusation against him, you say, was "his speaking blasphemous things against the temple and the law*." You have forgotten to add the charge of blasphemy "against Moses and against God†." The blasphemy against the temple and the law probably consisted in a prediction, that the temple was to be destroyed, and the ritual law of course abolished. The blasphemy against Moses was probably his assertion, that the authority of Moses was inferior to that of Christ. But what could be the blasphemy against God? What was there in the doctrine of the Apostles, which could be interpreted as blasphemy against God, except it was this, that they ascribed divinity to one who had suffered publicly as a malefactor. That this was the blessed Stephen's crime, none can doubt, who attends to the conclusion of the story. He "looked up steadily into heaven," says the inspired historian, "and saw the glory of God," [that is, he saw the splendor of the Shechinah, for that is what is meant, when the glory of God is mentioned as something to be seen] "and Jesus standing on the right hand of God‡." He saw the man Jesus in the midst of this divine light. His declaring of what he saw ||, the Jewish rabble understood as an assertion of the divinity of Jesus. They stopped their ears; they

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 60.

† Acts vi. vers. 11.

‡ Acts vii. vers. 55.

|| Acts vii. vers. 56.

overpowered his voice with their own clamours; and they hurried him out of the city, to inflict upon him the death which the law appointed for blasphemers*. He died, as he had lived, attesting the deity of our crucified Master. His last breath was uttered in a prayer to Jesus, first for himself and then for his murderers. "They stoned Stephen calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit—and he cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge†."

LETTER
XII.

It is to be noted, that the word *God* is not in the original text; which might be better rendered thus, "They stoned Stephen invoking and saying, &c." Jesus therefore was the God, whom the dying martyr invoked in his last agonies; when men are apt to pray, with the utmost seriousness, to him whom they conceive the mightiest to save.

It seems the holy Stephen, full, as we are inform'd he was in those trying moments, of the Holy Ghost, was not in the opinion, which you are pleased to impute to me, but you will observe that I disclaim it, that "the proper object of prayer is God the Father‡." This you tell me I cannot but acknowledge. That the Father is *a* proper object of prayer, God forbid that ever I should not acknowledge. That he is *the* proper object, in the sense in which you seem to make the assertion, in prejudice and exclusion of the other persons, God forbid that ever I should concede. I deny not, that there is an honour personally due to him as the Father. There is also an honour personally due to the Son, as the Son; and to the Spirit, as the Spirit. But our knowledge of the personal distinctions is so obscure, in comparison of our apprehension of the general attributes of the Godhead, that it should

* Acts vii. vers. 57, 58.

† Acts vii. vers. 59, 60.

‡ Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 81.

seem

LETTER
XII.

seem that the Divinity [the *το Θεον*] is rather to be generally worshipped in the three persons jointly and indifferently, than that any distinct honours are to be offered to each separately. Prayer however for succour against external persecution seems addressed with particular propriety to the Son.

When you deny, not only that any precept, but that any proper example is to be found in scripture to authorize the practice *, you seem to have forgotten, beside many other passages, the initial salutations of St. Paul's epistles. Stephen's "short ejaculatory address" you had not forgotten; but you say, "it is very inconsiderable †." But, Sir, why is it inconsiderable? Is it because it was only an ejaculation? Ejaculations are often prayers of the most fervent kind; the most expressive of self-abasement and adoration. Is it for its brevity that it is inconsiderable? What then is the precise length of words, which is requisite to make a prayer an act of worship? Was this petition preferred on an occasion of distress, on which a Divinity might be naturally invoked? Was it a petition for a succour, which none but a Divinity could grant? If this was the case, it was surely an act of worship. Is the situation of the worshipper the circumstance, which in your judgement, Sir, lessens the authority of his example? You suppose, perhaps, some consternation of his faculties arising from distress and fear. The History justifies no such supposition. It describes the utterance of the final prayer, as a deliberate act of one who knew his situation, and possessed his understanding. After praying for himself, he kneels down to pray for his persecutors: and such was the composure with which he died, although the manner of his death was the most tumultuous and terrifying, that, as

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 81.

† Ibid.

if he had expired quietly upon his bed, the sacred Historian says, that "he fell asleep *." If therefore you would insinuate, that Stephen was not himself, when he sent forth this "short ejaculatory address to Christ," the history refutes you. If he was himself, you cannot justify his prayer to Christ, while you deny that Christ is God, upon any principle that might not equally justify you, or me, in praying to the blessed Stephen. If Stephen, in the full possession of his faculties, prayed to him who is no God; why do we reproach the pious Romanist, when he chaunts the litany of his saints? If the persuasion of Christ's divinity prompted the holy martyr's dying prayer, then there is no room to doubt, but that the assertion of Christ's divinity was the blasphemy, for which the Jews, hardened in their unbelief, condemned him.

Another instance, to which I ever shall appeal, of an early preaching of our Lord's divinity, tho' it may not conduce to your conviction, is the story of St. Paul's conversion: in which, as it is twice related by himself, Jesus is deified in the highest terms. I know not, Sir, in what light this transaction may appear to you. To me, I confess, it appears to have been a repetition of the scene at the bush, heightened in terror and solemnity. Instead of a lambent flame appearing to a solitary shepherd amid the thickets of the wilderness, the full effulgence of the Shechinah, overpowering the splendor of the mid-day sun, bursts upon the commissioners of the Sanhedrim on the public road to Damascus, within a small distance of the city. Jesus speaks, and is spoken to, as the divinity inhabiting that glorious light. Nothing can exceed the tone of authority on the one side, the submission and religious dread upon the other. The recital of this story

* Acts vii. vers. 60.

LETTER
XII.

seems to have been the usual prelude to the Apostle's public apologies; but it only proved the means of heightening the resentment of his incredulous countrymen.

These instances, Sir, will bear me out in the assertion, that our Lord's divinity was preached from the very beginning, till you can fix the first discovery to some later epoch. I am therefore not at all concerned in the solution of your first question.

The second, "when was the knowledge of our Lord's divinity first imparted to the minds of the Apostles," is wholly insignificant, and uninteresting to all parties. It concerns not me; because, with my notions of inspiration, I am obliged to believe what the inspired Apostles taught, however late the time might be when they themselves received their information. It concerns not you, because, with your notions of inspiration, you are at liberty to dispute what the inspired Apostles taught, whatever pretensions they may have to the earliest information. If the knowledge was infallible which they received from inspiration, it matters not how late; if not infallible, it matters not how early they received it. If no positive proof were extant, that the deity of Christ was an article of faith among the first Christians; the difficulty of assigning the precise time, when the Apostles were first made acquainted with it, might be something of an objection against the antiquity of the doctrine, and against its truth. But in opposition to direct proof the objection, were it founded, could have no weight.

Upon this question therefore, as the former, you must not take it amiss if I leave you to yourself. Choose any time, within the compass of each apostle's life, for the epoch of his illumination. I will hold no argument upon the subject: although I
have

have an opinion upon the question, as upon the former, which I ever shall inculcate in my own congregation: and this, Sir, happens to be the very reverse of that, which you imagine I must allow. You must allow, you say to me, that at first "the Apostles were wholly ignorant of this*." *At first* indeed, before their acquaintance with our Lord, or at least with the Baptist, they were ignorant, I believe, of every thing. But from their first acknowledgement of our Lord as the Messiah, they equally acknowledged his divinity. Their faith, I believe, was but unsettled, as their notions of the Messiah's kingdom were certainly very confused, till the descent of the Holy Ghost. But so far as they believed in Jesus as the Messiah, in the same degree they understood and acknowledged his divinity. The proof which I have to produce of this from holy writ, consists of too many particulars, to be distinctly enumerated in the course of our present correspondence. I shall mention two; which, to any but a decided unitarian, will be very striking; Nathaniel's first profession, and Peter's consternation at the miraculous draught of fishes. It was in Nathaniel's very first interview with our Lord, that he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God! thou art the king of Israel!†." And this declaration was drawn from Nathaniel by some particulars in our Lord's discourse, which he seems to have interpreted as indications of Omniscience. When Simon Peter saw the number of fishes taken at a single draught, when the net was cast at our Lord's command, after a night of fruitless toil; "he fell down at the knees of Jesus, saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord‡." Peter's consternation was evidently

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 56.

† John i. vers. 49.

‡ Luke v. 8.

LETTER
XII.

of the same sort, of which we read in the worthies of earlier ages upon any extraordinary appearance of the light of the Shechinah; which was founded on a notion, that a sinful mortal might not *see God and live*. These and many other passages of the Evangelical History discover, that our Lord's associates, although it was not till after his ascension that the Holy Ghost led them into all truth, had an early apprehension of something more than human in his character. Nor indeed were early intimations of it wanting; in the first annunciation of his birth by the angelic host; in the Baptist's declarations; and in our Lord's own assertions of a power to forgive Sins, and of an authority to dispense with ordinances of divine appointment; and in his claim to be the proper Son of God, which the unbelieving Jews ever understood as an express deification of his own person.

But JUDAS ISCARIOT, you think, "could not possibly have formed a deliberate purpose of betraying our Lord*," had the belief of his divinity been general among the Apostles before his crucifixion. Or had any such pretension been set up, which had not gained belief, Judas would have taken advantage of the imposition, and would have made a discovery of it to the prejudice of our Lord. It should seem, Sir, that you think your own cause almost desperate, if you would desire that Judas Iscariot should be admitted as an evidence for you, or as an advocate. But what if your cause should turn out to be, what Judas Iscariot himself would scruple to undertake. I would not willingly be the apologist of that traitor. But I am inclined to think, that traitor as he was, his intentions went not to the mischief which he effected. It was rather perhaps his meaning to cheat the

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 58.

Chief Priests of their money, than actually to sell his Master's life. When he bargained to lead them for a certain sum to the place of our Lord's retirement; he thought perhaps that he might safely trust to his Master's power to repel any attack upon his person. This is very consistent with a belief of our Lord's divinity, as the most dishonourable designs are often found to consist with the truest speculative principles. That he meant not the mischief which ensued, may be presumed from the remorse which followed, and the vengeance which in despair he executed upon himself. But I care little about his testimony. Only I think, that, with the Devils he might believe and tremble, and trembling might be still a Devil.

After all, Sir, I might have spared so particular an answer as I have given to your fifth letter. In the conclusion of it, you furnish me with a short reply, of which I might have availed myself. "Had there been any pretence, you say, for imagining that the Jews in our Saviour's time had any knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, and that they expected the second person in it, in the character of their Messiah, the question I propose to you would have been needless*." Then, Sir, the question which you propose to me, is needless. The Jews in Christ's days had notions of a trinity in the divine Nature. They expected the second person, whom they called the Logos, to come as the Messiah. For the proof of these assertions I refer you to the work of the learned Dr. Peter Allix, entitled the "*Judgement of the antient Jewish church against the Unitarians.*" A work which it is to be hoped, Sir, you will carefully look through, before you send abroad your intended view of the doctrine of the first ages concerning Christ†. That

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 64.
Letters, p. xviji.

† Preface to

LETTER
XII.

you will be convinced by Dr. Allix's proof, I have indeed little hope. I shall produce however another authority, to which you will perhaps be more inclined to pay regard: the authority of a learned unitarian of the last century, who wrote in vindication of a former unitarian work, of great fame, called *The Naked Gospel*. The Naked Gospel, you know, was printed at Oxford in the year 1690, and was burnt the same year by order of the Convocation. The anonymous author of the *Historical Vindication* was supposed to be Le Clerc. He it is, who says in his preface, that the platonic enthusiasm crept first into the Jewish, afterwards into the Christian church. Then he tells his readers how the Jews picked up their platonism. Of which, he says, the principal doctrines were two: the one, that of the Pre-existence of Souls; the other, that of the Divine Trinity. These, he says, were the opinions of the Jews in the days of our Saviour and his Apostles: and hence perhaps it hath come to pass, that, as the learned have observed, certain platonic phrases and expressions are to be found in the New Testament, especially in John's Gospel. You, Sir, and this unitarian brother seem to agree but ill in your notions of the doctrine of the first ages. He thought the doctrine of the Trinity one of the antient corruptions of Judaism; which, in'laying the foundations of Christianity, the heaven-taught builders some how or other forgot to do away. You have discovered, "that every notion of the trinity, whatever may be fancied with respect to more antient times, was obliterated from the minds of the Jews in our Saviour's time*." I believe, Sir, I shall never sit down to the task, which you desire me to undertake; a translation of the works of Bishop

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 64.

Bull *. For as his argument is not for the un-^{LETTER}
learned, the labour would be thrown away. A ^{XII.}
work which might be more generally edifying, and
in which I might engage, if it were not that I
really grudge every moment which I give to con-
troversy, would be a harmony of the unitarian Di-
vines.

You will ask me, whence was the offence which
the assertion of our Lord's divinity, by my own
confession, gave the Jewish people, if divinity made
a part of their own notion of the Messiah's charac-
ter? I answer, the deification of the Messiah was
not that which gave offence, but the assertion that
a crucified man was that divine person: and before
his crucifixion, the meanness of his birth gave an
offence, less in degree, but of the same kind.

I am, &c.

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 113.

LETTER THIRTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's sixth.—Dr. Priestley's ignorance of the true principles of Platonism appears in his disquisitions concerning matter and spirit.—The equality and unity of the three principles of the Platonists.—Dr. Priestley's peculiar sense of the word personification not perceived either by the Archdeacon or the Reviewer.—The outline however of Dr. Priestley's work not misrepresented by the Archdeacon.—The conversion of an attribute into a substance differs not from a creation out of nothing.—Never taught by the Platonists—The eternity of the Logos independent of any supposed eternity of the world.—Not discarded therefore by the converted Platonists.—Dr. Priestley's arguments from the analogy between the divine Logos and human reason answered.—The Archdeacon abides by his assertion that Dr. Priestley hath misrepresented the platonic language.—The Archdeacon's interpretation of the Platonists rests not on his own conjecture, but on the authority of Alhenagoras—confirmed by other authorities.—Dr. Priestley's quotations from Tertullian considered—from Lactantius.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
XIII.

YOU must forgive me, if I confess to you, that so long since as when I first redde your disquisitions concerning matter and spirit, I formed no very high opinion of your learning in the Platonic philosophy. What gave me my first suspicion, as I well remember, was a surprize which you express, that a certain French writer should speak

speak of the idea of a circle as itself not round*, LETTER
 and of the ideas of extended things as not ex- XIII.
 tended. Your apprehension, that ideas could
 not be divisible unless they were extended†,
 heightened my suspicion: which became some-
 thing more than suspicion, when I found you
 speaking of the soul's need of a *repository for*
her ideas ‡, especially during sleep; as if ideas
 were things to be locked up, with our plate and
 china, in a cupboard. Dr. Priestley, I said to my-
 self, confounds ideas with the impressions of ex-
 ternal objects on the material sensory: which im-
 pressions are in truth as much external to the mind,
 as the objects which make them. What pity, that
 he hath not been more conversant with the Plato-
 nists! These previous indications, of your defici-
 ency in this branch of learning, in some measure
 prepared me for what I was to find in your *History*
of the philosophical doctrine concerning the soul; in-
 somuch, that I read your assertion, that "Plato's
 "philosophy was the oriental system with very
 "little variation§," without indignation; because
 I considered it as the reproach of an enemy, whom
 better information might make a friend. I was
 indeed surprized at your want of information in
 this particular instance; because Mosheim, whose
 authority, as an historian, you seem to hold in due
 respect, indisposed as he is in general to be partial
 to the Platonists, hath however so far done them
 justice, as to point out the total discordance, in
 principle at least, between the sober philosophy of
 Plato and the extravagancies of the Gnostics; whose
 principles were those of the oriental system. After
 this, Sir, it gives me no surprize at all, that you
 should now assert, "that it was never imagined

* Disquisitions, p. 39.

79, 93.

§ Ibid. p. 274.

† Ibid. p. 37, 38.

‡ Ibid.

LETTER XIII. "that the three component members of the Platonic Trinity were either equal to each other, "or strictly speaking one*." They were, Sir, more strictly speaking one, than any thing in nature of which unity may be predicated. No one of them could be supposed without the other two. The second and third being, the first is necessarily supposed: and the first [*Αγαθόν*] being, the second and third, [*Νεϋ & Ψυχή*] must come forth. Concerning their equality, I will not say that the Platonists have spoken with the same accuracy, which the Christian fathers use; but they include the three principles in the divine nature, in the *τὸ Θεόν*, and this notion implies the same equality which we maintain; at the same time I confess, that the circumstance of their equality was not always strictly adhered to by the younger Platonists, for reasons which I have explained †.

The want of perspicuity is a fault in writing, of which indeed, Sir, you are little guilty. It is the more extraordinary, that your *personification* of the Logos should not be distinctly understood either by myself or by my learned ally. For my own part, I confess, I had not the least apprehension, that you used the word *personification* in any other than its usual sense; till in your reply to the animadversions of my learned ally, you distinguished between the personification of the Logos, which you impute to Justin, and the earlier doctrines of the Gnostics ‡. By personification I had no suspicion that you meant any thing more than a grammatical *prosopopeia*; which you seemed to think had been used both by Plato and St. John, in speaking of the divine attribute of wisdom. Certainly, Sir, you express yourself in your history, as if you

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 99. † See Charge, p. 68.

‡ Reply to Monthly Review for June, §. 5.

thought that a literal acceptance of such figured LETTER
XIII. language was the occasion, that a meer attribute was mistaken for a real person, first in the academy, and afterwards in the church: and that this error led to another, still founded on a literal interpretation of figurative expressions; the expressions in which St. John, as you conceive, describes the extraordinary degree in which wisdom and power were conferred on Christ, being understood as assertions that Christ was that very person, which was supposed to have been previously described by the evangelist as a branch of the divinity. I thought, Sir, that you conceived that a meer grammatical *prosopopeia* had been in this way the first step towards the deification of Christ. Upon looking again into the second section of your history, I see no great reason to be ashamed of my mistake. I believe, Sir, that without the assistance of the comment, which your Reply to the Monthly Reviewer furnishes, no reader of your work would discover any other meaning in your expressions. It seems, however, that the word *personification* is a new term of theology, invented by you for a doctrine which is also of your own invention, though you are pleased to give the credit of it to the platonic fathers: the doctrine of the conversion of an attribute into a person; which was supposed, you say, by its first advocates to take place immediately before the creation of the world, but being afterwards "carried farther back, namely, to all eternity, it led "to the present doctrine of the Trinity*." The distinction between this personification of the Logos and the earlier doctrines of the Gnostics is, it seems, an important feature in the great outline of your work. The outline of your work, as sketched by yourself, is briefly this. The exaltation of the per-

* Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 34, 35.

LETTER
XIII.

son of Jesus Christ began with the Gnostics, who maintained the preexistence of human souls. When their errors were exploded, the personification was adopted. The Arian doctrine was subsequent to this; and it was after all these, that, from improvements upon the doctrine of personification, the present doctrine of the Trinity was brought out*. It is a heavy accusation against my learned ally and me, that we have not sufficiently attended to these distinctions; and the omission shews, that "we have never formed a right conception of what we undertook to exhibit†."

Every writer must be allowed to be the best interpreter of his own expressions. But in the sense in which I am now taught to understand the personification of the Logos, I cannot perceive, Sir, with what propriety it is called the first step towards the deification of Christ; since the doctrines of the Gnostics, which you maintain to be more antient, had, in your judgment, the same tendency. I am sometimes inclined to suspect, that you are apt yourself to fluctuate between your own and the vulgar sense of personification.

But although I should allow, that I missed the sense of a particular expression; I am not sensible, that I misconceived or misrepresented your account of the antient opinions. You certainly make the Unitarian doctrine the general opinion of the first Christians. In the second age you allow, that something of divinity was ascribed to Christ; but you think it was a divinity of an inferior kind, including neither necessity nor eternity of a distinct personal existence. I therefore misrepresented not the great outline of your work, when I said that the first race of Christians were in your opinion Unitarians

* Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 34. 35.

† Ibid. p. 35. and Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 66.

rians in the strictest sense of the word, the second Arians*. This is the sum of your account, stated not in your words, but in my own. You complain however that I "have misconceived your idea†." You inform me that "the platonizing Christians" were not Arians. That it is well known that "they were not Arians, but the orthodox who" platonized‡.

Sir, I am very sensible that the platonizers of the second century were the orthodox of that age. I have not denied this. On the contrary, I have endeavoured to shew that their platonism brings no imputation upon their orthodoxy. The advocates of the catholic faith, in modern times, have been too apt to take alarm at the charge of platonism. I rejoice and glory in the opprobrium. I not only confess, but I maintain, not a perfect agreement, but such a similitude, as speaks a common origin, and affords an argument in confirmation of the catholic doctrine, from its conformity to the most ancient and universal traditions. Nor is this the only article in which heathen antiquity, however you may slight the argument, by the vestiges which are to be traced even in idolatrous rites of the patriarchal history and the patriarchal creed, bears its testimony to revelation. But, Sir, I well know that these platonizers of the second century were far more ancient than Arius: nor did I mean to charge you with the absurdity of maintaining a contrary opinion. I thought that the notion which you express, of what was orthodoxy in the second century, was conveyed in a single word; when it was said, that you represent the Christians of the second race as Arians; that is, as Arians in belief; because the divinity which you suppose to have been

* Charge, p. 7. † Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 66.

‡ Ibid.

LETTER XIII. ascribed by them to Christ, was only of that secondary sort, which Arius and his followers, in a later age, allowed. But to convict me of an error in this representation of your opinion, you now set up a distinction, between the opinions which you would ascribe to the early Platonists and the Arian tenets. "The Logos of the platonizers, you say, was an attribute of the father, and not any thing that was created out of nothing, as the Arians held Christ to have been*." However, when this distinction hath served the purpose of convicting me of one error, it is cleared away again to convict me of another. This Logos of the Platonists, I am told, "was originally nothing more than a property of the divine mind, which assumed a separate personal character in time †." This is the same notion which is expressed in your history in these words. "All the early fathers speak of Christ as not having existed always, except as reason exists in man, viz. as an attribute of the Deity ‡." And the assumption of a personal character, seems to be the same thing, which in your history you call "the conversion of a meer attribute into a thinking substance §." Indeed, it is not easy to conceive, how a personal character may be assumed, otherwise than by being made a person. Now, what the difference may be between a making out of nothing, and the conversion of a meer attribute into a substance; or how a person made out of an attribute may differ from a person made out of nothing; I would rather, Sir, that you than I should take the trouble to explain. If this was the difference between the doctrines of the early platonizers and the Arians, and this is the whole difference which you put between

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 66.

† History of Corruptions, p. 42.

‡ Ibid. p. 72.

§ — p. 40.

them,

them, they might pass, I think, for the same; and your account of the platonic orthodoxy was not misrepresented by me, when I said that you made it the same thing, the same in form not in time, with Arianism. LETTER
XIII.

But, Sir, I maintain that this is an erroneous and injurious account of the Platonic Christians. This conversion of an attribute into a substance was never taught by them; nor by any except the Sabellians, those earlier visionaries, described by Justin Martyr, who imagined occasional emissions and absorptions of the divine Logos. "Which opinion" (you say) was not very remote from the unitarian "doctrine*." I am happy, Sir, to be informed by you, that the unitarian doctrine approaches to opinions so mysterious. I thought, that to be clear of mysteries had been its particular recommendation. I now find, that were I even to turn unitarian, I should have mysteries to digest: and mysteries much too hard for my digestion. I will therefore adhere to my creed; in which I know no mystery to be compared with this notion, of a thing which may be a person and no person by fits and starts. But for any production of the Logos, by a conversion, either permanent or occasional, of an attribute into a thinking substance; I still maintain, that, were the thing conceivable, the Platonists were likely to be the last to adopt it: because a created Logos, to use my former expression, had been no less an absurdity in the academy, than it is an impiety in the church: and the notion, that this doctrine took its rise among the Platonists, betrays an entire ignorance of the genuine principles of their school†.

You tell me, that "I discover in these animadversions a total ignorance of what you have

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 73.

† Charge, p. 52.

"asserted.

LETTER
XIII.

“ asserted.—That you have no-where said, that
 “ either the Platonists, or the platonizing Chris-
 “ tians, held, that the Logos was created, or that
 “ it had ever not existed *.” What then have you
 said? You said in your History, that “ All the early
 “ Fathers speak of Christ as not having existed al-
 “ ways, except as—an attribute of the deity †.”
 that they taught “ the conversion of this attribute
 “ into a substance ‡.” And what is it you say
 now? You say now, that the platonizing Christians
 held, that “ whereas the Logos was originally no-
 “ thing more than a property of the divine mind, it
 “ assumed a separate personal character in time ||.”
 Be pleased, Sir, to explain the difference between
 this conversion of attribute into substance, or
 property into person, and a creation out of no-
 thing.

You admit however, that the eternity of the Lo-
 gos was a doctrine of Platonism; but you attempt
 to assign a reason, why the converted Platonists,
 when they entered into the church, must have parted
 with this opinion. “ The Logos (you say) of the
 “ Platonists had, in their opinion, always had a
 “ personal existence, because Plato supposed crea-
 “ tion to have been eternal; but this was not the
 “ opinion of the platonizing Christians, who held,
 “ that the world was not eternal; and therefore,
 “ retaining as much of Platonism as was consistent
 “ with that doctrine, they held, that there was a
 “ time when the Father was *alone*, and without
 “ a Son §.” Sir, if I thought proper to deny your
 assertion, that Plato supposed creation to have been
 eternal, it would require much more skill in the
 Platonic philosophy, than is to be gotten at second

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 72.

† History of Corruptions, p. 42.

|| Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 72.

‡ Ibid. p. 40.

§ Ibid.

hand from modern authors, who pretend to give an account of it, to confute the proof which I might bring to the contrary from Plato's own writings. But as the younger Platonists generally held the eternity of creation, and Plato in some parts of his writings seems to favour that opinion, notwithstanding what he says to the contrary in the *Timæus*; I shall take no advantage of the uncertainty of your assumption. Indeed it would be sufficient for your purpose, were your argument found in other parts, that the opinion of the world's eternity was current in that school in which the Christian Platonists were trained, and was probably entertained by them all before their conversion. Still your conclusion will not stand, unless you can prove, that the Platonists, whether Christian or Pagan, held the *Logos* to be a part of the world, or thought the eternity of the *Logos* a consequence only of the world's eternity. Whereas neither the one nor the other of these principles would have been allowed, even by those Platonists who deemed the world eternal. The eternity of the world seemed to them a consequence of that eternal activity, which they ascribed to the deity: that is, to the three principles of Goodness [*Ταγαθον*], Intelligence [*Νεϋς*], and Vitality [*Ψυχη*]: and chiefly to the two last. For to the first principle they inscribed indeed an activity, but of a very peculiar kind; such as might be consistent with an undisturbed immutability. He acts, *μενῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἡδαι*, by a simple indivisible unvaried energy; which, as it cannot be broken into a multitude of distinct acts, cannot be adapted to the variety of external things; on which therefore the First Good acts not, either to create or to preserve them, otherwise than through the two subordinate principles. The eternal activity therefore of the Deity, and by consequence the existence of Intellect and the Vital

LETTER
XIII.

principle, in which alone the divine nature is active upon external things, was necessary in this system to the eternity of the world. And this eternal activity was supposed to be the consequence of that goodness of the deity, which could not suffer that to be delayed, which, because he hath done it, appears to be fit to be done. The world therefore, however the fact may actually be, might or might not have been eternal. If it hath been eternal, it hath been such, not by its own nature, but by the choice of a free agent, who might have willed the contrary. But Intellect and the Vital principle, have been eternal by necessity, as branches of the divinity. These therefore must have been eternal, even if the world had never been, although the world could not be without them; and this, upon the principles of those philosophers who deemed the world eternal. The converted Platonists therefore, when upon the authority of revelation they discarded the notion of the world's eternity, would not find themselves obliged to discard with this the eternity of Intellect or the Logos: for that stands upon another ground, and is indeed eternity of quite another kind.

But whatever they might be at liberty to do, you are confident of the fact, that the eternal existence of the Logos, as a person, is a notion which was discarded by the Christian Platonists, when they became Christian. Your proof is drawn from the analogy which some of them imagined between the divine Logos, and the reason of the human soul, or between the Logos and human speech; and from the doctrine of the conversion of an attribute into a substance, which you persuade yourself they deliver in the most unequivocal language.

“ That the Logos of the Father, the same that
 “ constituted the second person in the Trinity, ex-
 “ actly

"actly corresponded to the logos, or reason, or word of man, was the idea of Athanasius himself *." LETTER
XIII.

In proof of this assertion you bring a passage from Athanasius, in which, to prevent as it should seem a conclusion which the unwary might draw from the agreement of the name, instead of the exact correspondence which you imagine, he shews the great difference between the divine Logos and human speech. Tertullian, in a passage cited in your history †, sets up something of an analogy between the divine Logos and the human reason. This analogy, if I mistake not, hath been pursued by the schoolmen with their peculiar subtlety; and, as far as it obtains, is well explained by the learned Dr. Charles Leslie, in his dialogues intitled *The Socinian Controversy discussed*. Tertullian, to prevent the very conclusion which you draw from this analogy, that the Logos was at some time or another a meer attribute, remarks, that nothing empty and unsubstantial can proceed from God; for the divine nature admitting neither quality nor accident, every thing belonging to it must be substance. This argument is ably stated in the work just mentioned, the dialogues of the learned Dr. Leslie.

For the conversion of an attribute into a substance, I abide by my assertion, that it is the offspring of your own imagination; and can only have arisen from a misapprehension of the language of the Platonic fathers. It is true, that they speak of the Son's generation as taking place at a particular time, as commencing indeed with the creation. But by this generation they understood not any beginning of his personal existence, but the projection of his energies; the display of his powers in the production of external substances.

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 69.

† History of Corruption, p. 38.

LETTER
XIII.

You reply, "that any meer external display of powers should ever be termed generation, is so improbable, from its manifest want of analogy to any thing that ever was called generation before or since; that such an abuse of words is not to be supposed of these writers, or of any person, without very positive proof; and, in this case, you say to me, you advance nothing but a meer conjecture, destitute of any thing that can give it a colour of probability*." This sentence, Sir, only finishes the proof, if it was before defective, of your incompetency in the subject. It shews, that you have so little acquaintance with Platonism, that your mind cannot readily apprehend a Platonic notion, when it is clearly set before you. What you take for my meer conjecture is the express assertion of Athenagoras, in the very passage which you have quoted: and Athenagoras, I should think, might be a sufficient evidence of his own meaning. He says, that the Son was called the Son as being the first offspring of the Father—not because he was ever made, but because he went forth to act upon material substances†. He explains the generation of the Son, by declaring first what it signifies not, then what it signifies. A making it signifies not; a going forth, according to Athenagoras, it signifies. That the generation of the Son of God is something figuratively called a generation, will hardly be denied. Athenagoras declares what he understood by the figure; and the interpretation which he puts upon it, seems to have been general among the writers who came from the same school. It rests not however upon my conjecture, but upon his authority; the fault, Sir, is not in me, if you cannot perceive his meaning when it is

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 70.

† See Charge, p. 53—56.

rendered in our own language. You object a want of analogy, between the figure and the thing which it is supposed to represent. This, I think, with an unitarian should be but a slight objection: since the whole language of the New Testament, in their view of it, is made up of figures in which analogy is wanting. But the question is not what may be the natural sense of the word generation, when it is applied to the Son of God, or what may be its true sense when it is so applied in Scripture; but in what sense it was accepted by the Platonizing Christians. I affirm, upon the authority of Athenagoras, that it was understood by them, when they speak of it as taking place at a certain time, not of a beginning of the Son's existence, but of a display of his powers. To confute this assertion, instead of critical reasoning upon the propriety of language, you must produce some better authority upon your own side, than that of Athenagoras, whose testimony is express and full on mine. LETTER
XIII.

But for the sense which these Platonists put upon the word generation, I am not solicitous to defend it. I have spoken of it in my Charge as a conceit; and I have spoken of the attempt, to put a determinate sense upon a figurative expression, of which no particular exposition can be drawn from holy writ, as highly presumptuous*. Still, Sir, the Platonists are not without a defence, against what you have found to object to the propriety of the expression, in the sense in which they understand it. You say to me, "Since according to your hypothesis the Logos was always an intelligent person, he must have exerted his intellectual faculties in some way or other from all eternity, as much as the Father himself†." It is true, Sir.

* Charge, p. 56 and 61.

† Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 71.

But

LETTER XIII. But it was not an exertion of his faculties *in some way or other*, but the first exertion of them on external things, that the Platonic Fathers understood by generation. This was the exertion in which the Son came forth. Before this he energized only within himself: he lay, as it were, unissued in the bosom of the Father. You go on—" was the exertion of the faculties of the Father in the creation of the world ever called a generation of the Father?—and yet, according to you, this language must have been equally proper with respect to the Father *." —Not according to me, Sir. I hold with the Platonists, that the Father's faculties are not exerted on external things, otherwise than through the Son and Holy Ghost: these two persons being, as it were, the two faculties, in which alone the divine nature is active on created things. Although I approve not the attempt to determine the meaning of a figure, which the holy Scriptures leave undetermined; yet I cannot allow, that the language, in that interpretation of it which I ascribe to the Platonists, is as improper of the Son as it would be of the Father. I perceive indeed no impropriety in it, as applied to the Son: I only complain of the want of authority from Holy Writ.

Still I maintain, that the thing in question is, not the propriety or impropriety of an expression; but the fact, how an expression was used and understood by certain writers. It were endless to accumulate authorities; but if the single testimony of Athenagoras is not sufficient, I will produce two more; to one of which at least I expect that you will pay some regard, because it is given by heretics. The first is that of Constantine the Great. The emperor may be numbered among the platonizing Christians;

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 71:

because,

because, as you have yourself observed, he alleges the authority of Plato in support of the Catholic doctrine. Now Constantine the Great in his epistle to the Nicomedians, written after the Nicene council, uses these expressions——“ he was begotten, “ or rather he himself came forth (being even ever “ in the Father) for the setting in order of the “ things which were made by him*.” Here the emperor expounds generation by coming forth; he thinks, “ that he came forth,” the more significant expression; and he asserts the eternal co-existence of the Son and Father. The other testimony, on which I should more rely for your conviction, if I could hope that any testimony might produce it, is that of Arius the Hæresiarch, and the Priests and Deacons of his faction. In their common letter to Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria (the seat you know of the platonic school) stating what they believed, and what they disbelieved: among the articles which they disbelieved is this; “ that the “ Son previously existing was afterwards begotten†.” And it is remarkable, that this stands last in a list of articles of disbelief. In the preceding articles their disbelief is justified, by a reference of the rejected propositions to certain Heretics, as the first authors of them; of one to Valentinus, of another to Manes, and another to Sabellius. But this article is not referred to any heretic; which argues that they were conscious, that this was the opinion of the church. It is true they immediately subjoin, that “ Alexander himself had “ often publicly declared against those who introduced such things;” as if this had been one of

* ἐγενήθη, μαλλον δε προηλθεν αὐτος, καὶ παντοῖε ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ὧν, ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ πεποιημένων διακοσμησιν.

† εἰς τὸν οὐρα προτερον ὑστερον γενησεντα.

LETTER
XIII.

the things, which Alexander condemned. But the falsehood of this insinuation appears from another epistle of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia, to whom as a friend the heretic may be supposed to write without art or disguise. In this epistle he mentions the proposition, "that the Son" "is co-existent with God without generation*," as one of the articles of Alexander's public doctrine, to which he could not give assent. You will find both these epistles, in Epiphanius's account of the Arians.

From these testimonies it is indisputable, that the early Platonists; by the generation of the Son, when they speak of it as taking place at a particular time, understand not any beginning of his existence; and it appears that it was the language of the orthodox, at the time of the Nicene council, that the existence of the Son was prior to his generation, and independent of it; coæval indeed with the eternal Fathers. Later writers distinguish three generations: the incarnation; the going forth to the business of creation; and an eternal generation; which last is only a name for the unknown manner in which the Son's existence is connected with the Father's. Tertullian, in the passage which you have quoted in your history †, which you call upon me so particularly to consider ‡, only speaks the language of his times, and never dreamed that he should be understood to assert a beginning of the Son's existence, when he said, "that the nativity" "of the word was perfected when God said, *Let there be light.*"

You now, Sir, produce another passage of Tertullian to prove "how ready the Platonizing Chris-

* ἐπειδὴ καὶ συμφωνοῦμεν αὐτῷ δημοσίᾳ λεγόντι.—συμπαρχει ὁ υἱὸς ἀγεννητῶς τῷ θεῷ.

† Vol. I. p. 38—40.

‡ Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 67.
istians

“ tians were to revert to the idea of an attribute of LETTER
 “ God in their use of the word Logos *”. But XIII.
 the passage, instead of proving this readiness of the
 platonizing Christians, proves the readiness of the
 pagan philosophers to apply this same name to a
 person ; even to the Maker of the Universe.

You call upon me to consider also a passage
 cited in your History from Lactantius, whose cr-
 thodoxy you tell me I cannot question †. Sir, you
 are not more inaccurate in your citations from the
 antients, than unfortunate in your divinations
 about the principles of your contemporaries, and
 the concessions which they will be willing to make
 to you. The orthodoxy of Lactantius I shall ques-
 tion, I shall deny. He had not perhaps the dispo-
 sitions of an heretic. He did not set himself to
 oppose, what he knew to be the approved doctrine of
 the church. But his talent was eloquence, which
 he possessed in a high degree, and his learning was
 in mythological antiquity. In Philosophy his in-
 formation was small ; in Divinity he was a child.
 The common places of Morality and Natural Re-
 ligion he touches with elegance, and he inveighs
 against the pagan Superstition in a masterly strain.
 But in his attempts to philosophize, or to expound
 articles of faith, he is contemptible. In the seventh
 chapter of his first book he ascribes a beginning to
 the existence of the eternal Father. No wonder
 then that he should ascribe a beginning to the Son’s
 existence. You are welcome, Sir, to any advan-
 tage you may be able to derive from the authority
 of such a writer.

I persuade myself I have now shewn, that your
 objection to the catholic doctrine, founded on its
 supposed platonism, and your argument for what
 I shall call the Arianism of the Platonizers from

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 76.

† Ibid.

Athenagoras are well entitled to the places which they hold among my specimens of insufficient proof; of which the one is the sixth, and the other the eighth in order.

I am, &c.

LETTER FOURTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Eighth.—The Archdeacon's supposition, that the first Ebionites worshipped Christ, defended—His supposition, that Theodotus was the first person who taught the unitarian doctrine at Rome, defended.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
XIV.

OF all my nine specimens of insufficient proofs selected from the first book of your History, the fifth is the only one about which any doubt is likely to remain (except with yourself) that it was properly alleged. For the seventh and the ninth you give up: and the other six have been considered.

My Fifth specimen was your misrepresentation of Eusebius, a writer of acknowledged veracity and candour, whom you very rashly charge with inconsistency, and even with unfairness; because in his account of Theodotus the hæresiarch, who appeared at Rome about the year 190, he cites another writer, who says, that this Theodotus was the first who taught the meer humanity of Christ; whereas it appears from his own history, that the Ebionites, who held the meer humanity of Christ, were

were far more antient than Theodotus. Admitting the antiquity of the Ebionites, I maintain, that Eusebius is so easily reconciled with the author whom he cites, that the difference between them is no just ground to tax the veracity of either. It is very certain, that Theodotus maintained the meer humanity of Christ in the grossest sense: in that gross and shocking sense, in which it is at this day taught by yourself and Mr. Lindsey. It is not certain that the Ebionites, before Theodotus, had gone further than to deny our Lord's original divinity. They probably, like Socinus, admitted some unintelligible exaltation of his nature after his resurrection, which rendered him the object of worship. If this was the case, Theodotus might justly claim the honour of being the first assertor of our Lord's humanity, being indeed the first who made humanity the whole of his condition. By this very natural supposition, that the Ebionites were unitarians of a milder sort than Theodotus, Eusebius might have been reconciled with himself, had it been his own assertion, that Theodotus was the first who taught the meer humanity of Christ*.

But this is not the assertion of Eusebius, but of another writer cited by Eusebius. Now, since Theodotus broached his heresy at Rome, it is very probable, that the writer cited by Eusebius was a Roman, and that he treated of the state of religion in the western church, and especially at Rome: where Theodotus was probably the first, who in any sense taught the meer humanity of Christ †.

You tell me, in your eighth letter, that the difference which I put between Theodotus and Ebion is advanced upon my own authority ‡. Truly, Sir, I think that a supposition which reconciles a

* See Charge, p. 37, 38. † Ibid. p. 39.

‡ Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 103.

LETTER
XIV.

writer of established credit with himself, or which is nearly the same thing, with another writer whom he cites with approbation, should need no great authority to support it, unless it be contrary to known fact, in which case indeed no authority might support it, or in itself improbable. Now, Sir, can you prove, that Christ was not worshipped by the original Ebionites? Can you prove this, I would ask, by explicit evidence? For as for that kind of proof in which you so much delight, which is drawn by abstract reasoning from general and precarious maxims; it is of no more significance in history, than testimony would be in mathematics. To think to demonstrate a fact by syllogism is not less absurd, than to go about to establish a geometrical theorem by an *affidavit*. Excuse me, if I insist upon the difference in the nature of things between historic certainty and scientific truth. I apprehend an inattention to this distinction hath misled many, and hath been the cause of much fruitless labour in many subjects. Scientific truth can only be established by abstract reasoning. Testimony can in science produce nothing more than probability. In history it is quite the reverse: abstract reasoning can never go beyond a probability: proof must arise from evidence. And the reason of this is plain. The principles of scientific truth are all within the mind itself; the truths of history are the occurrences of the external world. Neglecting this necessary distinction, the great Berkley questioned the existence of the material world, because he found it incapable of demonstration; and I have known many seek a confirmation of geometrical theorems from experiment. Now to return to my subject; have you evidence, for that is the only proof to which, in this case, the judicious will attend; have you evidence, that Christ was not worshipped

shipped by the Ebionites? If you have none, my supposition is not contrary to known fact. Is it in itself improbable, since all innovations have a progress, and the divinity of Christ was the belief, and the worship of Christ the practice of the first ages, that presumptuous men would begin to question the ground, on which his right to worship might be thought to stand, before they abandoned the worship to which they had been long habituated? Hath not this been the progress of the corruption (you will call it reformation, but I must speak my own language) in later times? Socinus, although he denied the original divinity of our Lord, was nevertheless a worshipper of Christ, and a strenuous assertor of his right to worship. It was left to others to build upon the foundation which Socinus laid, and to bring the Unitarian doctrine to the goodly form in which the present age beholds it.

LETTER
XIV.

But, Sir, my supposition is not only free from improbability; it is highly probable. Ebion in his notions of the redeemer, as I have already had occasion to observe, seems to have been a meer Cerinthian. Epiphanius says, that he held the Cerinthian doctrine of a union of Jesus with a superangelic being. The Cerinthian doctrine was, that this union commenced at our Lord's baptism; was interrupted during the crucifixion and the time of our Lord's interment, but restored again after his resurrection: and being restored it rendered the man Jesus an object of divine honours. As Epiphanius says in general of Ebion, that he held the Cerinthian doctrine concerning Christ, without specifying parts that he received, and parts that he rejected; the probability is, that he received the whole; and of consequence, that he worshipped Christ as a deified man, notwithstanding that he denied his original divinity. This supposition of mine hath, you see,
a pro-

LETTER
XIV.

a probability of its own; which is quite distinct from that which accrues to it from its use in reconciling Eusebius with the Historian that he quotes, and is founded on the acknowledged agreement of Ebion with Cerinthus.

For my other supposition, that Theodotus might be the first person who taught the unitarian doctrine at Rome, you think it highly improbable, "because Tertullian says, that in his time the unitarians were the greater part of believers." At Rome therefore, "where there was a conflux of all religions, and of all sects," the probability is little that there should be no unitarians. Sir, I will grant—I am liberal, I am sure, in my concessions—I will grant, that Rome swarmed with Unitarians in the time of Tertullian. Not for the reason which you assign; that Tertullian says, the unitarians were the majority of believers. For this Tertullian hath not said, with whatever confidence you may ascribe to him the dreams of Zwicker and his credulous disciples. I must take the liberty to say, Sir, that a man ought to be accomplished in antient learning, who thinks he may escape, with impunity, and without detection, in the attempt to brow-beat the world with a peremptory and reiterated allegation of testimonies that exist not. But, Sir, although I deny that Tertullian says, that the unitarians were in his time the majority of believers, yet I will grant, that they were numerous at Rome in the time of Tertullian. I profess I know not how numerous or how few they were. But, to shew the strength of my cause, since you are pleased to have it so, let them be numerous. How will their numbers affect my supposition, that Theodotus was the first person who at Rome taught the unitarian doctrine? Might not this be, although the unitarians swarmed at Rome in the time of Tertullian? Believe me, Sir, it well might be; for the

the times of Tertullian were the very times of Theodotus. About the year of our Lord 185 Tertullian embraced Christianity. About the year of our Lord 190 came Theodotus the apostate, the tanner of Byzantium, preaching at Rome the doctrine of Antichrist. LETTER
XIV.

My learned ally has a third conjecture for the reconciling of Eusebius and his author. It is by no means necessary to our argument, that either of my suppositions, or that his, or that any particular conjecture which may be made upon the subject, should be brought to a certainty. You tax Eusebius with want of candor and consistency. The charge rests upon an assumption, that what Eusebius relates of the antiquity of the Ebionites, and what his author affirms of the first assertion of our Lord's meer humanity by Theodotus, cannot be interpreted but in contradictory senses. If we have shewn, by a variety of probable conjectures, that the two assertions admit consistent interpretations, that each may be true in the sense in which each writer understood himself, without contradiction of the other; the whole evidence of your accusation is demolished, and the charge of temerity and presumption lies heavy on yourself for an attack, which you cannot support with proof, upon the character of a grave and respectable Historian.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER FIFTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Seventh.—The metaphysical difficulties stated by Dr. Priestley neither new nor unanswerable.—Difficulties short of a contradiction no objection to a revealed doctrine.—Difficulties in the Arian and Socinian doctrines.—The Father not the sole object of worship.—Our Lord, in what sense an image of the invisible God and the first-born of every creature.—Not the design of the Evangelists to deliver a system of fundamental principles.—The doctrine of the Trinity rests on the general tenor of the sacred writings.—The inference that Christ is not God, because the Apostles often speak of him as man, invalid.—The inference from the manner in which he speaks of himself invalid.—The Athanasians of the last age no Tritheists.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
XV.

AFTER the declaration which I have made, that I will not enter into a regular controversy with you upon the subject of the Trinity, you will not wonder, if you receive only a general reply to some parts of your Seventh Letter. A particular answer to the several objections which it contains, would lead me into metaphysical disquisitions; which I wish to decline, because in that subject I foresee that we should want common principles and a common language. The questions, which you propose in the second and the fourth sections of this letter, are not new, and have been answered. But if they were unanswerable, what would be the inference? The inference would only be, that the doctrine of the Trinity hath its difficulties.

culties. And is it possible, that any doctrine concerning the nature of the Deity should be without its difficulties? When the infinite distance is considered between Man and his Maker, it seems reasonable to presume, that there must be mysteries, far above the reach of the human understanding, both in the nature of God and in the plan of his government: that the fullest discovery that could be made, of God and of his ways, to the human intellect, must be imperfect; because, however perfect in itself, it could be but imperfectly apprehended. No difficulties therefore, short of a contradiction, can be allowed to constitute an objection to a doctrine claiming a divine original. On the contrary, it should rather seem, that to involve difficulties must be one characteristic of a divine revelation: and its greatest difficulties may reasonably be expected to lie in those parts, which immediately respect the nature of God and the manner of his existence. If you would suppose the contrary, if you would insist that a divine revelation, being intended for the general information of mankind, must be perspicuous and free from difficulty; I would ask, is Christianity clear of difficulties in any of the unitarian schemes? Hath the Arian hypothesis no difficulty, when it ascribes both the first formation and the perpetual government of the universe, not to the Deity, but to an inferior being? Can any power or wisdom, less than the supreme, be a sufficient ground for the trust we are required to place in Providence? Make the wisdom and the power of our ruler what you please; still upon the Arian principle, it is the wisdom and the power of a creature. Where then will be the certainty, that the evil, which we find in the world, hath not crept in through some imperfection in the original contrivance, or in the present management? since

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LETTER
XV.

every intellect below the first may be liable to error, and any power short of the supreme may be inadequate to purposes of a certain magnitude. But if evil may have thus crept in, what assurance can we have, that it will ever be extirpated? In the Socinian scheme, is it no difficulty, that the capacity of a meer man should contain that wisdom, by which God made the universe? Whatever is meant by *the word* in St. John's Gospel, it is the same word of which the evangelist says, that all things were made by it, and that it was itself made flesh. If this word be the divine attribute Wisdom; then that attribute, in the degree which was equal to the formation of the universe, in this view of the scripture-doctrine, was conveyed entire into the mind of a meer man, the son of a Jewish carpenter. A much greater difficulty, in my apprehension, than any that is to be found in the catholic faith.

In the third section of your Seventh letter, you build an argument for the sole deity of the Father, upon an assumption that he is the sole object of worship. To this argument I have replied*. I deny the assumption. I cite the example of St. Stephen, whose last act of worship was addressed to Christ. You allege, on the other side, the example of our Saviour, who himself prayed to the Father; the authority of Origen; and I know not what early and universal practice. I reply, that our Saviour, as a man, owed worship to the Father. I maintain, that neither the authority of Origen, nor any universal practice of a later age, can outweigh the example of St. Stephen, were it single; much less supported as it is by other examples of equal weight. The worship addressed to Christ by St. Stephen, and the Apostles, either proves the divinity of Christ, or it justifies the worship of the saints and martyrs in the Roman church;

* Letter XI.

and they who live in countries where the papal superstition is established, may without scruple, invoke St. Michael, St. Raphael, St. Abel, St. Abraham, St. Stephen, St. Sebastian, and all the saints, angelic and human, Jewish and Christian, of the Roman calendar.

LETTER
XV.

The text of St. Paul (Col. i. 15.) was produced by me*, not as the most explicit assertion that may be found in Scripture, of our Lord's divinity, but as an explicit assertion, that he is at least something much more than man, and that the universe was made by him. If the dignity of his nature were mentioned only in this single passage, or were nowhere described by higher titles than those which the Apostle uses here, "the *image* of the invisible God and the *first-born* of every creature," divinity might seem more than is implied in them. But when we recollect the stronger expressions which occur in other places; in particular St. Paul's assertion, that he was originally in the form of God, of which he emptied himself, to take the form of a servant, i. e. of a man; and when to all other proofs of the high dignity of his nature we add St. John's explicit doctrine of his eternity and Godhead; it must be very evident, that it could not be the intention of St. Paul, in this passage, to sink the Son of God into the rank of a creature, or to separate him from the divine nature. The force of St. Paul's description in both its branches lies rather in the adjectives *invisible* and *first-born*, than in the substantives *image* and *creature*. The first branch of the description, that "he is the image of the invisible God," points to a circumstance, upon which the early fathers dwell, as one of the principal personal distinctions: that it is in the person only of the Son that the glory of the Godhead can be rendered visible. *For God*, in the per-

* Charge, p. 13.

LETTER son of the Father, *no man hath seen at any time**.
 XV. The Son is therefore an image of the invisible deity; not as a likeness formed in a distinct substance, but as he, who in every instance of an immediate intercourse between God and man, hath been the appearing person. The second branch of the description holds out a distinction between birth and creation, which implies that the Son's existence is dependent on the Father's in some other manner than that in which any creature's existence is dependent on its maker's. You must know, that the words in the original text, *πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισως*, are equivalent to these; *ὁ τεχθεις προ πασης κτισως*, *he who was born or begotten before any creation, or before any thing was made*. "It is observable, (says " Dr. Clarke) that St. Paul does not here call " our Saviour *πρωτοκτιστον πασης κτισως*, *the first created of all creatures*, but *πρωτοτοκον πασης κτισως*, " *the first-born of every creature*; the first begotten " before all creatures."

I allow, that " there is nothing that can be " called an *account* of the divine nature of Christ " in the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, or St. " Luke†." But every one of the gospels abounds with passages, in which it is so evidently implied, that no room is left to doubt, that the four evangelists had but one opinion upon the subject. I cannot admit your position, that " each of the gospels " was intended to be a sufficient instruction in the " fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christia- " nity‡." Nothing seems to have been less the intention of any of the evangelists, than to compose a system of fundamental principles. Instruction in fundamentals in that age was orally delivered. The general design of the Evangelists seems to have been

* See John i. 18. and vi. 46.

† Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 91.

‡ Ibid.

nothing more, than to deliver in writing a simple, unembellished narrative of our Lord's principal miracles, to record the occurrences and actions of his life, which went immediately to the completion of the ancient prophecies, or to the execution of the scheme of Man's redemption; and to register the most interesting maxims of Religion and Morality, which were contained in his discourses. The principles of the Christian religion are to be collected neither from a single gospel; nor from all the four gospels; nor from the four gospels with the acts and the epistles; but from the whole code of revelation, consisting of the canonical books of the Old and New Testament: and for any article of faith the authority of a single writer, where it is express and unequivocal, is sufficient. Had St. Paul related what he saw in the third heaven, I hope, Sir, you would have given him implicit credit, although the truth of the narrative must have rested on his single testimony.

LETTER
XV.

I cannot however grant, that the general tenor of scripture supposes not such a trinity, as I contend for*. I contend, that your doctrine is what stands upon particular texts; while the catholic faith is supported by the general tenor of the sacred writings, and by the consent of those writings, in many parts, with an universal tradition of unexplored antiquity.

You ask me, "why the doctrine of the Trinity, if it be a truth, was not taught as explicitly in the New Testament, as the doctrine of the divine unity both in Old and New †?" And you say, that "many passages in scripture inculcate the doctrine of the divine unity in the clearest and strongest manner ‡." Be pleased, Sir, to pro-

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 87.

† Ibid. p. 92.

‡ Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 93.

LETTER
XV.

duce one of the many. I know of no doctrine of the divine unity, taught either in the Old Testament or in the New, but the doctrine that Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, is the one true God, in opposition to the variety of imaginary gods worshipped by the heathen†. Concerning the metaphysical unity of the divine nature the scriptures are silent; except that by discovering a Trinity of persons, they teach clearly what the Unity is not; namely, that it is not personal. If you imagine that the absolute Unity of the divine substance is more easy to be explained than the Trinity, let me entreat you, Sir, to read the Parmenides. It is indeed in Plato's school, if any where, that a man's eyes are likely to be opened to his own ignorance. Read the Parmenides—You will then perhaps perceive, that that Unity which must be the foundation of all being, is itself of all things the most mysterious and incomprehensible. I must know more of it than I do, before I can pretend to perceive, what is so clear to you, that you think that I cannot deny it, “that the doctrine of the Trinity looks like an “infringement of the Unity‡.”

The argument contained in the seventh section of your seventh letter splits, I think, into three, resting on three different assumptions. The apostles both in the book of Acts, and in their epistles usually call Christ a Man; therefore they knew not that he was God; for the discovery would have changed their language*.

† το μεν γαρ Θεον ομολογουεν ενα, προς αντιδιαβολην της ελληνων πολυθεου πλανης, πρωτοι παρεληφασιν Ιουδαιων παιδες. Euseb. Ecc. Theod, lib. i. c. 2.

‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 92.

* Ibid. p. 93.

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They speak of him as a man in reasoning and argumentation. Therefore he was a man †. LETTER
XV.

They behaved to him as a man in their ordinary intercourse with him; therefore they had no apprehension that he was God ‡.

To the two first arguments it is an answer, that according to the faith which I defend, Christ is truly a man as well as God. It is no wonder therefore that he should be mentioned as a man, when nothing in the narrative, or in the argument, requires that his divinity should be particularly brought in view.

To the first argument in particular it is a further answer, that it was the stile of all the sacred writers, and it is the stile of all writers, to name things rather after their appearances than their internal forms. The tempter you know, in the Mosaic history of the fall, is called the serpent, and is not once mentioned by any other name. The three angels, who appeared to Abraham in the form of men, are called men throughout the story.

To the second argument in particular it is a further answer, that as the scheme of man's redemption required the incarnation of the Son of God; the apostles would often find it necessary, in reasoning upon that scheme, and in argumentation in defence of it, to insist on his humanity.

The third branch of the argument cannot be allowed to have any force at all, even though the assumption upon which it rests should be admitted, if we have the authority of the apostles, in their writings, for the deity of Christ. The most that could be inferred, were the assumption true, would be something strange in their conduct; and even this might be a hasty inference. The singularity of their conduct might disappear, if the accounts which they

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 94.

‡ Ibid. p. 93 & 94.

have

LETTER
XV.

have left of our Lord's life on earth, and of their attendance upon him, were more circumstantial. But the truth is, that the foundations of this argument are unsound. It may be gathered from the evangelical history, imperfect as it is, that the behaviour of the apostles to our Lord during his life, possessed as they were with an imperfect wavering belief in him as the Messiah, and with indistinct notions of the Messiah's divinity, was the natural behaviour of men under these impressions. They treat him upon all occasions with a very distant reserve: sometimes they invoke him as a deity, as St. Peter when he was sinking in the sea, and all the disciples in the storm. If the angels Michael or Gabriel should come and live among us in the manner which you suppose *, I think we should soon lose our habitual recollection of their angelic nature. It would be only occasionally awakened by extraordinary incidents. This at least would be the case, if they mixed with us upon an even footing, without assuming any badges of distinction, wearing a common garb, partaking of our lodging and of our board, suffering in the same degree with ourselves from hunger and fatigue, and seeking the same refreshments. The wonder would be if angels, in this disguise, met with any other respect, than that which dignity of character commands, with something of occasional homage, when their miraculous help was needed. This was the respect which our Lord met with from his followers. You say, "he could not divest himself of his superior and proper nature †:" but St. Paul says quite the contrary; that he emptied himself, and assumed a form, which set out of sight the transcendent dignity of his nature, and deprived him of the homage due to it. The scheme of man's redemption required

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 94.

† Ibid.

this humiliation, which made a part of the suffer-
ings by which our guilt was to be atoned. LETTER
XV.

In the eighth section of this seventh letter, you argue against our Lord's divinity, from "the manner in which he speaks of the power by which he worked miracles, as not his own but the father's †," and from the manner in which he speaks of himself, saying, *My Father is greater than I*. If from such expressions you would be content to infer, that the Almighty Father is indeed the fountain and the center of divinity, and that the equality of Godhead is to be understood with some mysterious subordination of the Son to the Father; you would have the concurrence of the ancient fathers, and of the advocates of the true faith in all ages. If you would infer any other inferiority, than what is necessarily implied in the relation of a Son; some of the very passages, to which you allude, will serve to your confutation. Such are those sayings of our Lord, recorded in St. John's gospel, that "the Son can do nothing of himself" — "the word which you hear is not mine but the father's which sent me †——the father which dwelleth in me, he doeth the works §." Refer the expressions to the context; and it will appear, that, with something of a subordination on the part of the Son, they assert the most perfect identity of nature, the most entire unity of will, and consent of intellect, and an incessant co-operation in the exertion of common powers to a common purpose. You are, Sir, very positive in the assertion, that Dr. Waterland in particular, and all the strict Athanasians of the last age maintained, "that the Trinity consists of three persons, all truly inde-

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 95.

* St. John, v. 19. † Ibid. xiv. 24. § Ibid. xiv. 10.

LETTER “ pendent of each other*.” Upon this opinion, XV. which you ascribe to the strict Athanasians, you remark in your history †, that to make three proper distinct persons, independent of each other, is to make three distinct Gods. I concur with you in this remark, in which you have been anticipated by the Roman Dionysius; whose judgment you know, upon certain persons of his own time, who, in their zeal against Sabellius, ran into this error, “ is quoted with approbation by Athanasius himself ‡.” But, Sir, I deny of Dr. Waterland in particular, and of the strict Athanasians of the last age in general, that they fall justly under this censure.

Bishop Bull, in his defence of the Nicene faith, spends a whole chapter, and a very long chapter it is, upon the subject of the Son’s subordination; which he maintains to be as much a branch of the true faith, as the doctrine of the Son’s eternity or consubstantiality.

The same thing is asserted by Bishop Pearson, in his exposition of the apostles creed. He observes, that “ in the very name of Father there is “ something of eminence, which is not in that of “ Son, and something of priority we must ascribe “ unto the first in respect of the second person §.” “ —We must not therefore so far endeavour to “ involve ourselves in the darkness of this mystery, as to deny that glory which is clearly due “ unto the Father—he is God, not of any other, “ but of himself;—there is no other person who “ is God, but is God of him. It is no diminution “ of the Son to say, he is from another—but it

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 80.

† Vol. I. p. 147.

‡ See Dr. Priestley’s Hist. vol. I. p. 65, and the first of these Letters. § Pearson on the creed, p. 34.

“ were a diminution to the Father to speak so of LETTER
XV.
 “ him; and there must be some pre-eminence,
 “ where there is place for derogation—The first
 “ person is a Father indeed by reason of his Son, but
 “ he is not God by reason of him; whereas the
 “ Son is not only Son in regard of the Father,
 “ but also God by reason of the same†.” Upon
 this pre-eminence of the Father the learned bishop
 founds the congruity of the divine mission ‡; and
 he maintains, that “ the dignity of the Father ap-
 “ pears from the order of persons in the blessed
 “ Trinity, of which he is undoubtedly the first.
 “ Although in some passages of the apostolical dis-
 “ courses, the Son may be first named——and in
 “ others the Holy Ghost precede the Son——
 “ yet where the three persons are barely enu-
 “ merated, and delivered unto us as the rule of faith,
 “ there that order is observed which is proper to
 “ them——this order hath been perpetuated in all
 “ confessions of faith, and is for ever to be in-
 “ violably observed*.” And this order being so
 generally acknowledged by the fathers, the bishop
 remarks in a note, that “ when we read in the
 “ Athanasian creed that *in this Trinity none is afore*
 “ *or after other*, we must understand the negation
 “ of the priority of perfection or time §.”

To the same purpose the learned Mr. William
 Stephens, author of some able discourses on the
 Trinity, in his sermon on the eternal generation of
 the Son of God, preached before the University of
 Oxford, August 5th 1722; affirms, that “ on the
 “ communication of the Godhead from the Father
 “ to the Son—is founded and established all that
 “ subordination, which we assert among the Per-
 “ sons of the Trinity.” He adds, that “ unless

† Pearson on the creed, p. 35.

‡ Ibid.

* Ibid. p. 37.

§ Ibid.

LETTER " some subordination be maintained, we run into
XV. " Tritheism." For he agrees with you and me,
that " three *co-ordinate* Persons would be mani-
festly three Gods."

The same sentiments are acknowledged by Dr. Waterland, in his commentary on the Athanasian creed. " When it is said, *none is afore or after other*, we are not to understand it of order; for the Father is first, the Son second, the Holy Ghost third in order. Neither are we to understand it of office; for the Father is supreme in office, while the Son and Holy Ghost condescend to inferior offices. But we are to understand it, as the creed itself explains it, of duration and dignity †."

From these passages it appears, that you misrepresent the strict Athanasians of the last age, when you charge them with asserting such a separation and independence of the three Persons, as would amount to Tritheism; and you misrepresent me, when you insinuate, that I would set the three Persons at a greater distance, than the Athanasians of the last age allowed. I maintain that the three Persons are one Being; One by mutual relation, indissoluble connection, and gradual subordination: so strictly one, that any individual thing in the whole world of matter and of spirit, presents but a faint shadow of their unity. I maintain that each person by himself is God; because each possesses fully every attribute of the divine nature. But I maintain that these Persons are all included in the very idea of a God; and that for that reason, as well as for the identity of the attributes in each, it were impious and absurd to say, there are three Gods. For to say there are three Gods, were to say there are three Fathers, three Sons, and three

† Waterland on the Athanasian creed, p. 144.

Holy Ghosts. I maintain the equality of the three Persons in all the attributes of the divine nature. I maintain their equality in rank and authority, with respect to all created things, whatever relations or differences may subsist between themselves. Differences there must be, lest we confound the Persons; which was the error of Sabellius. But the differences can only consist in the personal properties, lest we divide the substance, and make a plurality of independent Gods. It will not put me out of conceit with the arguments, which I have brought to support these sacred truths, or with the illustrations which I have attempted, that you pronounce them equal in absurdity to any thing in the Jewish cabala* (of which I suspect you hardly know enough to judge with certainty of this pretended resemblance) or that you imagine, when you read me, that you are reading Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, or Duns Scotus†. Perhaps, Sir, though a protestant divine, I may sometimes condescend to look into the *Summa*‡, and may be less mortified, than you conceive, with this comparison. It was well meant, however, and is one of those general depreciatory insinuations, which are apt to catch the vulgar, and may serve the purpose of a reply upon any occasion, when a real reply is not to be framed.

LETTER
XV.

I am, &c.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 80.

† Ibid. p. 99.

‡ — no Protestant, I imagine, will ever think it worth his while to read many sections in that work—the *Summa*, History of Corruptions, vol. I. p. 119.

LETTER

LETTER SIXTEENTH.

The Unitarian doctrine not well calculated for the conversion of Jews, Mahometans, or Infidels, of any description.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
XVI.

YOU express in your history, and in your letters to me, a very charitable anxiety about Jews, Mahometans, and Infidels. It is one of your great objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, that it is, as you conceive, an obstruction to their conversion, which you think might be speedily effected, by reducing Christianity to the Unitarian creed. My notion is, that it is our duty to adhere to the letter of the gospel, and to leave it to God to open the eyes of Jews, Mahometans, and Infidels, in his own time and in his own way. Your device of bringing them to believe Christianity, by giving the name of Christianity to what they already believe, in principle exactly resembles the stratagem of a certain missionary of the Jesuits, of whom I have somewhere redde; who, in his zeal for the conversion of an Indian chief, on whom the sublimity of the doctrine of the gospel and the purity of its moral precepts made little impression, told him that Christ had been a valiant and successful warrior, who in the space of three years had scalped men, women, and children without number. The savage was well-disposed to become a disciple of such a master—He was baptized with his whole tribe, and the Jesuit gloried in his numerous converts.

Pardon

Pardon me, Sir, if I express a doubt, whether your stratagem promises equal success. For the Jews; whenever they begin to open their eyes to the evidences of our Saviour's mission, they will still be apt to consider the New Testament in connection with the Old. They will look for an agreement, in principle at least, between the gospel and the law. When they accept the Christian doctrine, it will be as a later and a fuller discovery. They will reject it, if they conceive it to be contradictory to the patriarchal and the Mosaic revelations. Successive discoveries of divine truth may differ, they will say, in fullness and perspicuity, but in principle they must harmonize as parts of one system. They will retain some veneration for their traditional doctrines; and in their most ancient Targums, as well as in allusions in their sacred books, they will find the notion of one Godhead in a Trinity of persons; and they will perceive, that it was in contradiction to the Christians, that their later rabbin abandoned the notions of their forefathers. The Unitarian scheme of Christianity is the last therefore to which the Jews are likely to be converted, as it is the most at enmity with their ancient faith.

With the Mahometans indeed, your prospects may seem more promising; as the whole difference between you and them seems very inconsiderable. The true Mussulman believes as much or rather more of Christ, than the Unitarian requires to be believed; and though the Unitarians have not yet recognised the divine mission of Mahomet, there is good ground to think, they will not long stand out. In Unitarian writings of the last century, it is allowed of Mahomet, that he had no other design than to restore the belief of the unity of God—Of his religion, that it was not meant for a new religion, but for a restitution of the true intent

LETTER
XVI.

LETTER
XVI.

intent of the Christian—Of the grand prevalence of the Mahometan religion, that it hath been owing, not to force and the sword, but to that one truth contained in the Alcoran, the unity of God. With these friendly dispositions towards each other, it should seem that the Mahometan and the Unitarian might easily be brought to agree. But the experiment hath been very seriously tried, without any event answerable to the expectation. You may not know it, Sir, but so it was, that in the reign of Charles the second, a negociation was regularly opened, on the part of our English Unitarians, with his excellency Ameth Ben Ameth, ambassador of the emperor of Morocco at the British court, in order to form an alliance with the Mahometan prince for the more effectual propagation of the Unitarian principles. The two Unitarian divines, who undertook this singular treaty, address the ambassador and the Mussulmen of his suite, as “votaries” and fellow-worshippers of the sole supreme deity.” They return thanks to God, that he hath preserved the emperor of Morocco, and his subjects, in the excellent knowledge of one only sovereign God, who hath no distinction nor plurality of persons; and in many other wholesome doctrines. They say, that they with their pens defend the faith of one supreme God, and that God raised up Mahomet to do the same with the sword, as a scourge on idolizing Christians. They therefore stile themselves the fellow-champions with the Mahometans for these truths. They offer their assistance, to purge the Alcoran of certain corruptions and interpolations, which, after the death of Mahomet, had crept into his papers of which the Alcoran was composed. For of Mahomet they think too highly, to suppose that he could be guilty of the many repugnancies, which are to be found in the writings that

that go under his name. This work they declare themselves willing to undertake for the vindication of Mahomet's glory. They intimate, that the corrections, which they would propose, would render the Alcoran more consistent, not with itself only, but with the gospel of Christ; of which they say Mahomet pretended to be but a preacher. They tell the ambassador, that the Unitarian Christians are a great and considerable people. To give weight to the assertion, they enumerate the heresiarchs of all ages who have opposed the Trinity, from Paulus Samosatensis down to Faustus Socinus and the leaders of the Polonian fraternity: they celebrate the modern tribes of Arianising Christians, as assertors of the proper unity of God; and they close the honourable list with the Mahometans themselves. "All these, they say, maintain the faith of one—God. And why should we forget to add you Mahometans, who also consent with us in the belief of one only supreme deity." Such is the substance of a letter, which they presented to the ambassador, with some latin manuscripts respecting the differences between Christianity and the Mahometan religion, and containing an ample detail of the Unitarian tenets. They apply to the Mussulman as to a person of "known discernment in spiritual and sublime matters;" and they intreat him to communicate the import of their manuscripts to the consideration of the fittest persons of his countrymen. This singular epistle may be seen entire in Dr. Leslie's *Socinian controversy discussed*. An hundred years are almost elapsed, since these overtures were made to the Moor; and as no effect hath yet followed, it should seem, that the conversion of the Mahometans to the Unitarian Christianity is as unlikely as that of the Jews.

LETTER
XVI.

For the unbelievers, Sir, Mr. Gibbon, as you seem yourself to intimate, hath given you but slender hopes*. Unbelievers indeed are of two descriptions. The sober Deists, who rejecting revelation, acknowledge however the obligations of morality, believe a Providence, and expect a future retribution: and the Atheists, who have neither hope nor fear beyond the present life, deny the Providence of God, and doubt at least of his existence.

Infidels of the first description will hardly become your disciples, because you have nothing to teach them, but what they think they know. "We think, they will say, no less reverently than you of the moral attributes of God. Upon our notions of his attributes we build an expectation of a future existence; and we look for a lot of happiness or misery, in our future life, according to our deserts in this. The whole difference between you and us is this, that we believe the same things upon different evidence: you, upon the testimony of a man, who you say was raised up to preach these truths: we, upon the evidence of reason, which we think a higher evidence than any human testimony. We think that a revelation is pretended with a very ill grace, when nothing hath been actually revealed. Revelation is discovery. The doctrines of a God, a Providence, and a future state were known to the Jews before Christ; to the Patriarchs before Moses; they have been known to thinking men in all ages: and there can be no place for discovery, where there hath been

* "—— Mr. Gibbon has absolutely declined to discuss with me, as I proposed to him, the historical evidences of Christianity." Preface to Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 8.

no concealment." If you would say, that the end of revelation is, to extend to all mankind that useful knowledge which must otherwise have been enjoyed but by a few; to convey information by testimony to those who are incapable of informing themselves by abstract reasoning; that the gospel is therefore a revelation, because to the bulk of mankind it is a discovery, and a discovery of sufficient importance to claim a divine original: they will reply, that whatever weight this argument might carry, if it were urged by those who take the scriptures in their literal meaning, and conceive that the revelation is conveyed in a plain undisguised language; it is a feeble weapon in the hand of an Unitarian. "If your method of interpretation be the true one, the first preachers of Christianity, they will say, differed not from other moralists, otherwise than by the wonderful obscurity of their language, and the air of mystery which they have contrived to throw over the simplest truths. Their enigmatic language is as little adapted to popular apprehension, as the abstruse reasonings of philosophers. The success of their doctrine hath been such as might have been well foreseen. They were studious of obscurity—they have attained their end. They have been misunderstood by a great majority of their followers for almost two thousand years. They professed to teach the pure worship of the true God. The language, in which they conveyed their doctrine, hath been the means of introducing the grossest idolatry. We will not trust ourselves to such dangerous guides, who, as you expound their writings, never spake upon the most interesting subjects without figure and equivocation."

LETTER
XVI.

For the Atheistic infidels, who are in the first place to be convinced of the existence of a deity; your doctrine, that there is no mind in man, but what results from the organization of the brain, will never lead them to conclude, that mind is older than body in the universe. "You would persuade me, the Atheist will say, that there is an higher intellect than mine, the cause of all things. But if intellect in me be the result of motion, why not in any other intelligent? You only confirm my incredulity, and multiply my doubts. You make me doubt of my own intellect, while you would account for its production; and you confirm the suspicion which I have long entertained, that the material world is older than its supposed maker: that mind, if indeed such a thing exists, hath like all other things started spontaneously from a corporeal chaos, and instead of being the first cause and the governing principle, is the youngest of all nature's productions." Your principle that death is an utter extinction of the man, your Atheistical pupil will easily admit. But it is little likely to awaken him to the hope of a future existence. The hope which you hold out of a resurrection, he will tell you, is no hope at all, even admitting that the evidence of the thing could, upon your principles, be indisputable. "The Atoms which compose *Me*, your Atheist will say, may indeed have composed a man before, and may again. But *Me* they will never more compose, when once the present *Me* is dissipated. I have no recollection of a former, and no concern about a future self.

Et nunc nihil ad nos de nobis attinet, antè
Qui fuimus; nec jam de illis nos afficit angor,
Quos

TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

157

Quos de materiâ nostrâ nova proferet ætas.

LETTER
XVI.

Inter enim jecta est vitæ pausa, vageque
Deerârunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes."

It should seem, Sir, that your doctrines are ill
calculated for the conversion of Jews or Infidels.
Upon the Mahometans their efficacy hath been
tried without success, The Unitarians therefore
are not likely to be the instruments of these con-
versions.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER SEVENTEENTH.

The Archdeacon takes leave of the controversy.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER
XVII.

IT might be but consistent with the *pride*, which you impute to me as a churchman, and the *contemptuous airs* which I am apt to give myself with respect to dissenters*; were I to close our present correspondence without any notice of your animadversions upon that part of my Charge, which regards the studies of the younger clergy, and what you are pleased to call my terms of communion. It might be a sufficient, and not an unbecoming reply, to remind you that I spoke *ex cathedrâ*, and hold myself accountable for the advice which I gave to no human judicature, except the KING, the Metropolitan, and my Diocesan. This would indeed be the only answer, which I should condescend to give to any one for whom I retained not, under all our differences, a very considerable degree of personal esteem. But as Dr. Priestley is my adversary, in some points I could wish to set him right, and in some I desire to explain.

If I have any where expressed myself contemptuously, the contempt is not of you, but of your argument upon a particular subject, upon which I truly think you argue very weakly; and of your information upon a point, in which I truly think

* "If your pride as a churchman, and the contemptuous
"airs you give yourself with respect to Dissenters, &c."
Letters to Dr. H. p. 112.

you

you are ill informed. This hinders not, but that I may entertain the respect which I profess for your learning in other subjects, for your abilities in all subjects in which you are learned, and a cordial esteem and affection for the virtues of your character, which are great and amiable. Your attack being made upon those parts of the established faith, which I conceive to be fundamental principles of the Christian religion, I hold it my duty to shew the weakness of your reasoning; to expose your insufficiency in these subjects; and to bear my testimony aloud against your doctrine. Between duty to God and to his church, and respect for man, it were criminal to hesitate. Upon any occasion, wherein complaisance might be allowed to operate, you are the last person, whose feelings I would have wounded.

LETTER
XVII.

You seem to think that I secretly suspect you of artifices, which are incompatible with that purity of intention which I would seem willing to allow*. In your last pamphlet, you complain that I have charged you with several instances of gross dissimulation†. I am sensible that in these letters you will find more and stronger instances of charges, which you will be apt to interpret as unfavourably; and this I fear will heighten the suspicion which you express, that even the compliments I sometimes pay you are ironically meant‡.

Indeed, Sir, in quoting antient authors, when you have understood the original, which in many instances is not the case, you have too often been guilty of much reserve and management. This appears in some instances, in which you cannot pretend, that your own inadvertency, or your printer's, hath given occasion to unmerited imputations.

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 12.

† Remarks on the Monthly Review, p. 12, note.

‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 110.

LETTER
XVII.

tations. I wish that my complaints upon this head had been groundless: but in justice to my own cause, I could not suffer unfair quotations to pass undetected. God forbid that I should draw any conclusion from this unseemly practice, against the general probity of your character. But you must allow me to lament, that men of integrity, in the service of what they think a good end, should indulge themselves so freely as they often do, in the use of unjustifiable means. Time was when the practice was openly avowed, and Origen himself was among its defenders. The art which he recommended, he scrupled not to employ. I have produced an instance, in which to silence an adversary, he hath recourse to the willful and deliberate allegation of a notorious falsehood. You have gone no such length as this. I think you may believe me sincere, when I speak respectfully of your worth and integrity, notwithstanding that I find occasion to charge you with some degree of blame, in a sort in which the great character of Origen was more deeply infected. Would to God it had been otherwise. Would to God I could with truth have boasted, "To these low arts stooped Origen, but my contemptory, my great antagonist, disdains them." How would it have heightened the pride of victory, could I have found a fair occasion to be thus the herald of my adversary's praise.

I am not sensible, that I have spoken contemptuously of dissenters in general. A fair and conscientious dissent is not the object of contempt; neither is a petulant hostility against establishments respectable. The praise which I give the church of England, that she is the first in consideration of all the protestant churches, is no more than liberal dissenters have themselves allowed. I have heard, from very good authority, of a conversation that passed between the late Dr. Chandler and a clergyman

man of the church of Scotland, in which Chandler LETTER
 was a warm advocate for the constitution of the XVII.
 church of England, in preference to any of the re-
 formed churches. You will remember, that I make
 the learning and the piety of her clergy, of which
 ample monuments are extant, the basis of her pre-
 eminence; to which however another circumstance
 hath in some degree contributed; namely, that she
 had the discretion to observe some decency and mo-
 deration, in the business of reforming. I cannot
 admit, that mere distance from the church of Rome
 is the true standard of purity; and when you re-
 collect how strongly that maxim favours of Jack's
 spleen against Lord Peter, I am apt to think you
 will regret, that such a sentiment should stain your
 page*.

It is still my opinion, that any young clergy-
 man who will diligently apply to the course of stu-
 dies, which I took the liberty to recommend, may do
 without Dr. Whitby's *Disquisitions*, or Dr. Clarke's
Scripture doctrine †. The last treatise contains
 indeed a very full collection of the texts relating to
 the Trinity. The compilation from the fathers is
 incomplete; the learned author having carefully
 selected those passages which, taken by themselves
 in detachment from their contexts, seem favourable
 to his own opinions. I will not however deny,
 that to students of a certain description, the book
 may have its use. I myself perhaps owe some-
 thing to it: which, as you recommend it to my
 particular attention, it seems incumbent upon me
 to declare. I believe, Sir, that few have thought
 so much upon these subjects as you and I have
 done, who have not at first wavered. Perhaps no-
 thing but the uneasiness of doubt, added to a just

* See Letters to Dr. Hurdley, p. 112.

† Ibid. p. 3.

LETTER
XVII.

sense of the importance of the question, could engage any man in the toil of the enquiry. For my own part I shall not hesitate to confess, that I set out with great scruples. But the progress of my mind hath been the very reverse of yours. It was at first my principle, as it is still yours, that all appearance of difficulty in the doctrine of the gospel must arise from misinterpretation; and I was fond of the expedient of getting rid of mystery, by supposing a figure in the language. The harshness of the figures, which I had sometimes occasion to suppose, and the obvious uncertainty of all figurative interpretations, soon gave me a distrust of this method of expounding: and Butler's Analogy cured me of the folly of looking for nothing mysterious in the true sense of a divine revelation. By this cure I was prepared to become an easy convert to the doctrine of atonement and satisfaction; which seemed to furnish incentives to Piety, that no other doctrine could supply. I soon perceived, how the value of the atonement was heightened, and what a sublimity accrued to the whole doctrine of Redemption, by the notion, clearly conveyed in the scriptures literally taken, of a redeemer descending from a previous state of glory, to become our teacher and to make the expiation. Thus I was brought to a full persuasion of our Lord's pre-existent dignity. Having once admitted his pre-existence in an exalted state, I saw the necessity of placing him at the head of the creation. "For a derived pre-existent Being, "supposed to animate the body of Jesus, who is "not also the maker of the world, is, as you well "observe, a meer creature of the imagination; "whose existence is not to be inferred, with the "least colourable pretext from the scripture*:"

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 84.

since it is not to be found either in the literal, or LETTER
XVII. in the figurative meaning. Not in the literal confessedly. Not in the figurative; because if the texts, which speak of Christ as the maker of the world, admit a figurative construction; "much more those which refer only to his pre-existence †." I thank you, Sir, for expressing my own sentiments with so much perspicuity, and for proving them with so much evidence. Being thus convinced, that our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the maker of all things; I found that I could not rest satisfied with the notion of a maker of the universe *not God*. I saw that all the extravagancies of the Gnostics hung upon that one principle: and I could have little opinion of the truth of a principle, which seemed so big with mischief. I then set myself to consider, whether I knew enough of the divine unity, to pronounce the "Trinity an infringement of it." Upon this point, the Platonists, whose acquaintance I now began to cultivate, soon brought me to a right mind. It was in this stage of my enquiries, while I was wavering between the Arian tenets in their original extent, and the true faith, that I first opened Dr. Clarke's *Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*. I sat seriously down to the perusal of the book—I rose a firm and decided Trinitarian. And why not recommend to others, you will say, a book which had so principal a share in your own conversion? I will tell you. It is one of those books, which may either instruct or mislead, according to the previous attainments and habits of the student. I was much at home in the Greek language; I had read the Ecclesiastical Historians, and I had been many years in the habits of thinking for myself, upon a variety of sub-

† History of Corruption, vol. I. p. 146.

LETTER
XVII.

jects, before I opened Dr. Clarke's book. There is in most men a culpable timidity; you and I perhaps have overcome that general infirmity; but there is in most men a culpable timidity, which inclines them to be easily overawed by the authority of great names: and, much as we talk of the freedom and liberality of thinking and enquiry, it is this slavish principle, not as is pretended, any freedom of original thought, which makes converts to Infidelity and Heresy. Fools imagine, that the greatest authorities are always on the side of new and singular opinions, and that by adopting them, they get themselves into better company than they have naturally any right to keep: and thus they are secretly worshippers of authority, in that very act in which they pretend to fly in the face of it. They worship private authority, while they fly in the face of universal. They deride an old and general tradition, because they have not sagacity to trace the connection of its parts, and to perceive the force of the entire evidence: and while they thus trample on the accumulated authority of ages, with an idiot simplicity they suffer themselves to be ledde by the meer name of the writer of the day, a Bolingbroke, a Voltaire, a Gibbon, or a Priestley; as if they thought to become wise and learned by taking a share and an interest in the follies, or the party-views, of men of abilities and learning. And where a secret consciousness of ignorance is not accompanied with the vain ambition of being thought wise; still an undue deference to private authority, in prejudice of established opinion, seems to be the side upon which even modest men are liable to err. Inasmuch, that every man may be supposed to partake of this infirmity, in subjects in which he feels himself unlearned. To those therefore, who are qualified to use Dr. Clarke's book as a digest, which, though incomplete, may assist them in forming a judgement for

for themselves ; to those who can and will turn it to this use, it may be serviceable. But they, who from a modest sense of their own insufficiency in the learned languages, and in ecclesiastical history, may be disposed to listen to the opinion of the writer, will be more misledde by his authority than they will be informed by the compilation. In a word, it is a book of which a scholar may make his use, but I cannot recommend it to young Divines, in the beginning of their studies.

LETTER
XVII.

In the conclusion of your Seventh letter, you speak of a certain defence of Bp. Bull's of the damnatory clause in the Athanasian creed ; of which, inasmuch as I have recommended the writings of Bp. Bull without exception, you " presume, you tell " me, that I approve." And to correct these expressions, which state as a presumption only, or an inference, what might be directly proved upon me by my own words, you add in a parenthesis, that I have mentioned this among the most valuable works of that learned prelate *. Of whatever importance, Sir, I may conceive it to be, that the faith which was first delivered to the saints should be preserved whole and undefiled ; whatever I may think of the folly and the crime of setting up private judgement for the rule of public opinion, in opposition to a tradition traced to the first ages, and by consequence of the same authority with that on which the credit of the Canon rests ; I am no lover of damnatory clauses. I am an enemy to any application of damnatory clauses to particular persons. I am hopeful, that there is more folly in the world than malignity, more ignorance than positive infidelity, more error than heretical perverseness. How is it then, that I recommend a defence of the damnatory clause, among the most valuable of a learned Bishop's works ? Sir, did

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 100.

LETTER
XVII.

you write this in your sleep? Or is it in a dream only that I seem to read it? Bishop Bull's defence of the damnatory clause! From you, Sir, I have now my first information that Bishop Bull ever wrote upon the subject. The writings of Bishop Bull which I have particularly recommended, are these three Latin treatises; *Defensio fidei Nicenæ*; *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ de necessitate credendi Jesum Christum esse verum Deum*; *Primitiva et Apostolica traditio de Jesu Christi divinitate*. To which I might have added a fourth, of less importance, *Animadversiones in brevem tractatum Gul. Clerke, &c.* These are all his writings upon the Trinitarian Controversy, which are contained in the edition of his Latin works by Grabe. In these treatises there is no defence of the damnatory clause; nor, that I recollect, any mention of the Athanasian creed. There is no defence of the damnatory clause in the sermons and English tracts published by Mr. Nelson. Nor can I find any such tract mentioned by Mr. Nelson among the Bishop's lost works; for many small pieces, which it was known that he had written, were never found after his death. Where have I mentioned, Sir, with such high approbation, a work which I declare I have never seen; and of which, you will forgive me, if I still doubt the existence?

Had I been aware of the offence which I find the word *conventicle* hath given, I would have avoided the use of it. We are engaged in a subject, in which I hold it my duty to display my argument in its utmost force; and even to use pretty freely that high seasoning of controversy, which may interest the reader's attention; but I would not willfully give offence by harsh words, from which the reasoning may acquire neither force nor lustre. You say, that the word *conventicle* usually signifies, an unlawful assembly. For my own part I thought it barely equi-

equivalent to the old Greek word *συνελυσις*, which LETTER
XVII. was the name for certain irregular assemblies, not as illegal; for the word was brought into use in an age when all assemblies of Christians were, in the civil sense, equally illegal; but it was the name for assemblies, meeting for the purpose of religious worship, without authority from the Bishop. Such assemblies in the primitive ages were thought to be spiritually unauthorized; and in this sense the word conventicle is applicable at this day to many religious meetings, which are not liable to any legal penalties. I could have wished, that the use of it had been considered as one of the meer archaisms of my stile, in which nothing of insult was intended. I must however declare, that it would give me particular pleasure to receive conviction, that Mr. Lindsey's meeting-house and your own are not more emphatically conventicles; in your own sense, that is, in the worst sense of the word. From personal respect for you and him, I should be happy to be assured, that you stand not within the danger of the 35th of Eliz. c. 1. or the 17th C. 2. c. 2. To the penalties of which, and of other statutes, I must take the liberty to tell you, you are obnoxious, notwithstanding the late act of the 19th of his present majesty in favour of dissenters, unless at the general or quarter sessions of the peace for the county where you live, you have made a certain declaration*, which is required by that act, instead of the subscription to articles required by the former acts of Toleration. I am sorry, Sir, to inform you, that I find no entry of Mr. Lindsey's declaration in the office of the clerk of the peace either for the county of Middlesex or the city of Westminster. Could I make the same enquiry concerning you (which the distance of your residence pre-

* Appendix, N^o VI.

LETTER
XVII.

vents) I fear I should have the mortification to find, that you have no more than your friend complied with the laws, from which you claim protection. A report prevails, that you both object to the declaration, from conscientious scruples. A very sufficient excuse for not making it; but no excuse at all for doing what the law allows not to be done, except upon the express condition, that the declaration be previously made. Had you made the declaration, you might indeed be intitled to the same indulgence by virtue of the late act, to which you would have been intitled by a subscription to certain articles under former Acts of Toleration; but not without the performance of certain other conditions, required by the 1st of William and Mary, c. 18. from which other conditions dissenters are not released by any subsequent statutes. For the single operation of the 19th of our present gracious sovereign, c. 44. is to substitute a short and general declaration, instead of a more particular subscription. All other limitations of the indulgences granted by the 1st of William and Mary stand as they were. Had you therefore made the declaration which the law demands, still to intitle your meetings to the benefit of the Toleration, it would have been necessary that the places of them should be certified (according to the last clause of 1st of William and Mary, c. 18.) either to the Bishop of the Diocese, or to the Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry, or to the Justices of the Peace at the General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace for the County, City, or Place where such meeting may be held*.—I have searched the Registers of the Episcopal court of London, of the Archdeacon's court of Middlesex, and the records of the sessions for the County of Middlesex and for the City of Westminster, for an entry of the house in Essex-

* Appendix, N° V.

street, without success. About your meeting-house LETTER
XVII.
 I am precluded, as before, from making a regular enquiry. But I fear you have not taken the proper measures for your legal security; because the professed ground of your dissent from the church of England is not a meer disagreement about particular articles, but a general denial of the magistrates authority, either to prohibit or to tolerate †. Still, Sir, were you ready to comply with the requisitions of the law in these two particulars, the declaration of your own belief in the holy scriptures, and the notification of the place of meeting to the ecclesiastical or the secular magistrate, Mr. Lindsey and you, by the doctrines which you publicly maintain *, are excluded from all benefits of the Acts of Toleration. Your meeting-house and his, contrary to your imagination, are Illegal; UNKNOWN to the laws, and UNPROTECTED by them. If this be the definition of a Conventicle, they are CONVENTICLES by the express letter of the law, and in your own construction of the word. Still, Sir, I had no thought to insult over your miserable unprotected state. The extravagant outcry which you have made, and the arrogance with which you presume to set your conventicles upon a footing with our own churches ‖, have provoked me to salute you with these unwelcome truths. Respect for individuals in Mr. Lindsey's congregation and in yours, as well as for you and him, would have restrained me from the use of a word, which I had perceived to

† "Exclusive of every thing contained in the religion of the church of England, it is chiefly the authority by which it is enjoined that dissenters object to in it." Hist. of Corruptions, vol. II. p. 357.

* Appendix, N^o IV.

‖ "—our places of worship are as legal as yours—equally known to the laws and protected by them." Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 112.

LETTER
XVII.

be any otherwise reproachful, than as it might contain a strong disapprobation and censure of your doctrine, and a serious disavowal of your authority to exercise the sacred function. If this is to be deemed reproach, I am not at liberty to abstain from it. Your doctrine I must disapprove and censure, because I conceive it to be a gross, I trust not a willful, corruption of the word of God. If your authority, I speak not now of the authority which derives from human laws; but even in *that* you are deficient; for a meer exemption from civil penalties, which still is more than you enjoy, differs from authority, just as the King's pardon differs from his favour: if your spiritual authority, as ministers of the word and sacraments, is wrongfully called in question; you must bear with the prejudices of a churchman, who, when he reviews the practice of the primitive ages; when he ponders our Saviour's parting promise to be always present with the Apostles, the delegated preachers of the gospel, even to the end of the world; when he connects it with the history of the first ordinations, and with the great stress laid upon the Bishop's authority, by Clemens, the fellow-labourer of St. Paul, by Ignatius, the disciple of St. John, and by the whole church for many ages; allows himself to be easily persuaded, that the authority of the commission, under which he acts, is something more than meer human legislation can convey; and, while he would abhor to inforce civil penalties, may think it his duty occasionally to protest against a spiritual usurpation. Indeed, Sir, when I revolve in my thoughts the various disorders and distractions, which I have seen in my own country within the compass of my own life, arising from the irregular zeal of self-constituted teachers of religion; when I reflect, how the unity of the church hath been torn, how tender consciences are every day disturbed with groundless scruples,

scruples, and melancholy tempers driven to infan-
fany; how the simplicity of the vulgar hath been
first abused, and their principles in the end unsettled;
when I recollect, how eminently the State hath lately
been endangered, and the protestant cause disgraced,
by a combination of wild fanatics, pretending to
associate for the preservation of the reformed reli-
gion; when I consider, how by these scandals the
true religion hath itself been brought into discredit;
how it hath been injured by attempts to inflame
devotion on the one hand, and by theories fabrica-
ted to reduce the mystery of its doctrines on the
other; when I consider that the root of all these
evils hath been the prevalency of a principle, of
which you seem disposed to be an advocate, that
every man who hath credit enough to collect a con-
gregation, hath a right, over which the magistrate
cannot without tyranny exercise controul, to cele-
brate divine worship according to his own form, and
to propagate his own opinions; I am inclined to be
jealous of a principle, which hath proved, I had almost
said, so ruinous; and I lean the more to the opinion,
that the commission of a ministry, perpetuated by
regular succession, is something more than a dream
of cloystered gownmen, or a tale imposed upon the
vulgar, to serve the ends of avarice and ambition.
For whatever confusion human folly may admit, a
divine institution must have within itself a provision
for harmony and order. And upon these prin-
ciples, though I wish that all indulgence should be
shewn to tender consciences, and will ever be an
advocate for the largest toleration that may be
consistent with political wisdom, being indeed per-
suaded, that the restraints of human laws must be
used with the greatest gentleness and moderation,
to be rendered means of strengthening the bands of
Christian peace and amity; yet I could wish to plant
a principle of severe restraint in the consciences of

LETTER
XVII.

men. I could wish, that the importance of the ministerial office were considered; that the practice of antiquity were regarded; and that it might not seem a matter of perfect indifference to the laity, to what house of worship they resort. I cannot admit, that a very assembly of grave and virtuous men, in which grave and virtuous men take upon them to officiate, is to be dignified with the appellation of a church; and for such irregular assemblies, which are not churches, I could wish to find a name of distinction void of opprobrium. As such I used the word conventicle; as expressing great irregularity (which I must express, w^o is me if I express it not) but no infamy of the assemblies to which I applied it. If you are still disposed to be indignant about this harmless word; recollect I beseech you, with what respect you have yourself treated the venerable body to which I belong, the Clergy of the establishment. You divide it into two classes only; the Ignorant, and the Insincere. Have I no share in this opprobrium of my order? Have I no right to be indignant in my turn?

Still looking forward to the time, when after all that is past, we shall mutually forgive, and be ourselves forgiven, I remain,

DEAR SIR,

Your very humble Servant,

S. HORSLEY,

Fulham Palace,
June 15th 1784.

Postscript

Postscript to LETTER V.

TO the authorities for the epistles of Ignatius, according to the shorter copies, I must add Fabricius.

Postscript to LETTER VI.

EUSEBIUS, in his *Ecclesiastical Theology*, speaks as if he thought the name *Ebionites* had been imposed by the apostles themselves, upon those who disowned our Lord's divinity; which necessarily implies, that in his opinion the sect and the name were of the apostolic age. "Our Saviour's own first heralds, says Eusebius, named those Ebionites" ————— "who acknowledged not the "godhead of the Son." * Our Saviour's own first heralds must be the preachers, it should seem, of his own appointment; namely, the Apostles; and that they are the persons intended is the more probable, for the distinction which seems to be made between these *first heralds* and *Ecclesiastical Fathers*, who are afterwards mentioned. Strenuously as you assert the antiquity of the Ebionites, you have no where, that I remember, alleged this testimony. You were aware perhaps, that were it good for the antiquity of the sect, it would be equally good for the reason and origin of the name. For my own part I am not inclined to avail myself of it. I consider it as a hasty assertion of a writer

* Καὶ αὐτὰς δὲ τὴν σωτηρίαν ἡμῶν πρῶτον κηρυκας Ἐβιωναίους ὀνομαζόντων, ἑβραϊκῇ φωνῇ πλῶχας τὴν διάνοιαν ἀποκαλεντες τὰς εἰς αὐτὸν θεὸν λεγούσας εἶδεναι, καὶ τὴν σωτηρίαν τὸ σῶμα μὴ ἀρνεύμενας, τὴν δὲ τὴν υἱὸν θεοῦ ἰδόντας. Ecc. Theol. lib. I. c. 14.

over zealous to overwhelm his adversary by authorities. I mention it only to protest against any use, which you may hereafter be disposed to make of it, in a dearth of proof of Ebion's antiquity. Should you urge me with any part of this testimony; I shall have a right to insist, that you accept the whole. Should you produce it in proof, that a unitarian sect existed in the apostolic age; you will be obliged to allow, that it is equally a proof that the unitarian doctrine was expressly condemned by the Apostles. It will be no concern of mine to disprove the antiquity of Ebion, however I may disbelieve it, so long as the very ground of his claim seals his condemnation; so long as his pretensions to an early existence rest on a presumption, that he had the honour to be the object of Apostolical censure.

Upon the story of St. John and the hæresiarch, in the public baths at Ephesus, I passed judgement hastily, when I spake of it as a foolish story carrying *altogether* the air of fiction. I ought to have recollected, that Irenæus* vouches strongly for so much of it as he relates. He even cites the testimony of Polycarp, in terms which may be understood to imply, that he was himself one of many, still living when he wrote, who had heard the story from the mouth of Polycarp. The testimony of Irenæus is hardly to be disbelieved; the testimony of Polycarp is irresistible. But the story, which Irenæus relates after Polycarp, he relates of St. John and Cerinthus. It makes nothing therefore for the antiquity of Ebion. As related of him, with the addition of many improbable circumstances not mentioned by Irenæus, it may be deemed a fiction.

* Lib. iii. c. 3.

Postscript to LETTER VII.

A Learned correspondent of mine, an eminent Divine of the church of Scotland, a Calvinist, and by consequence a serious and devout believer in the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, hath remarked to me, that your assertion, that the Nazarenes were the first Hebrew Christians, might have had some colour given to it, from the history of the accusation of St. Paul before Felix, in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul was charged upon that occasion, by Tertullus the orator, as he is called, as a ringleader "*of the sect of the Nazarenes.*" Whence it might have been argued, that this was the name, which Christians in general at that time bore. This argument, I think, is far more specious, than any you have produced for yourself; but it is only an instance, by which it may be seen how easy it is, to frame arguments, in that oblique kind in which you so much delight, which may give a false colouring to things, and impose upon the ignorant or heedless. It is for this purpose, I believe, that it is produced by my learned and much honoured correspondent; not as a proof, which had it been set up by you, would have convinced, or even staggered, either him or me. It only proves, that in the infancy of Christianity, Christians, among the unbelieving Jews, who considered them as an heretical sect in their own religion, went by the name of Nazarenes; as followers of the Nazarene; for that was the appellation which, in contempt, they gave our Lord himself, from the obscure village to which his family belonged. But while the Christians were called Nazarenes by the unbelieving Jews, they were called among themselves *The Brethren, They of the Faith, and The Faith*; till at length, when they

they became more numerous, and received a large accession of converts from the Gentiles, *Christians* became the general name, and the Hebrew Christians, who still perhaps bore the name of Nazarenes among the Jews, were distinguished among Christians by the names of *The Hebrews* and *They of the circumcision*. I still therefore abide by my assertion, that the name of Nazarene was never heard of in *the church*, that is, among Christians themselves, as descriptive of a sect (as a general name for the whole fraternity of believers, it was never heard of in the church at all) but as descriptive of a sect, it was never heard of before the final destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian; when it became the specific name of the Judaizers, who at that time separated from the church of Jerusalem, and settled in the North of Galilee. The name was taken from the country in which they settled; but it seems to have been given in contempt, and not without allusion to the earlier application of it by the Jews to Christians in general. The intent of it was, to signify that these Judaizers, who were for imposing the yoke of the Mosaic Law upon the brethren of the uncircumcision, knew so little of the spirit of the gospel, that they were only to be considered as a sect of Jews; and were undeserving of any more honourable name, than that by which the unbelieving Jews, of the apostolic age, had been accustomed to express their contempt for the then new and little family of Christ: that they could not be more properly described than as heretical Jews, living in the poorest village of the poorest province.

APPENDIX.

Nº I.

Gentleman's Magazine for October 1783; p. 842.

MR. URBAN,

I WAS formerly a pupil of Dr. Harwood, and Nº I;
 read with my learned and worthy master Thucydides, Sophocles, and the life of Moses, in a magnificent edition of Philo, printed by the learned Mr. Bowyer; and wonder that Dr. Horsley should assert, as he is represented to do by the learned and ingenious Mr. Maty in his New Review, that *εως* is spoken of *persons* only; when it is applied to any thing of which the writer is speaking, that happens to be of the masculine gender. For instance, it is prædicated of bread *twice* in John vi. 50 and 58, *εως εστι δ αψλος*, and of a stone, Luke xx. 17, *the same*; viz. stone, *εως* is *become head of the corner*. Controversialists are apt to overshoot the mark.

GRÆCULUS.

Z

Nº

N^o II.

Gentleman's Magazine for November 1783, p. 944.

MR. URBAN,

N^o II. **B**E pleased, Sir, to inform your correspondent, *Græculus*, that Dr. Horsley has not asserted of the Greek pronoun *ἐτός*, that it is spoken of persons *only*. He renders it indeed, in the second verse of the first chapter of St. John's gospel, by the words "This Person," and he says, in a parenthesis, that "this is its natural force." And this, Sir, may be; although by the usage of the Greek writers, it is applicable, as *Græculus* with great truth remarks, to any thing of which the writer is speaking, that happens to be of the masculine gender. For few words, in any language, are confined to their natural and primary meaning. But, since the application of the word is confessedly so general in the best writers, *Græculus* will perhaps be apt to put the question, how should Dr. Horsley know, that "This Person" is more the natural sense of *ἐτός* than "This Loaf," or this any thing? Perhaps Dr. Horsley has observed, that it is peculiar to the two pronouns *ἐτός* and *αὐτός*, to be used of any one of the three persons. Which is one argument, that their proper sense is personal. Perhaps Dr. Horsley has observed, that the pronoun *ἐτός*, when it is demonstrative of any thing which has no person, and which the writer would not personify, is often put in the *neuter* gender, although the noun, which it represents, be masculine—*ἐπειδὴν δὲ ταῦτα λυσιτε*—after you have abrogated these LAWS—*νομῆς*. Demolth. Olymp. iii. —*τῷ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα μὲν*. this [i. e. this bread, *ἄρτος*] is my body. Matt. xxvi. 6. This is another argument

ment that ἄτος is naturally demonstrative of a person. For there are but three causes, to which the various anomalies of speech may be referred. Ignorance, negligence, design. Those, which are frequent in the best writers, can be ascribed to neither of the two first causes. They must have arisen therefore from the third. But the third, design, implies an end. And what should be the end of this anomaly of gender, in the word ἄτος, but that it was the means of avoiding an appearance of a *prosopopæia*, where no *prosopopæia* was intended.

Perhaps *Græculus*, though perfectly right in his remark, that ἄτος may be demonstrative of any thing of which the Greek name is masculine, has been unfortunate in his selection of passages in proof of it. Perhaps of the three, which he has produced, two are nothing to his purpose. Perhaps ἄτος ἐστὶν ὁ ἄψλος, &c. in both the texts in St. John, should be rendered "This person is the bread, &c." i. e. I am the bread, &c. It may be supposed that our Lord pointed to himself, when he said this. As the Baptist points to himself, when he says, 'Οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ πῦθης, &c. "For this person is the person spoken of, &c." i. e. For I am the person spoken of, &c. Matt. iii. 3. For that these are the Baptist's, not the historian's words, is evident from the form, in which the following sentence is begun. Αὐτός δὲ ὁ ἰωάννης. "Now this same John, &c." a form which marks the writer's resumption of his narrative, interrupted by the insertion of John's words.

Perhaps Dr. Horsley had not erred, had he affirmed that, in John i. 2. ἄτος must necessarily be rendered by "This Person." The utmost liberty of choice, which the context leaves, is between two expositions only. "This Person" or "This Word." If the latter be adopted, the second verse will be only a useless repetition of what had been
 Z 2 before

Nº II. before affirmed. Whereas in Dr. Horsley's view of it, it contains an explicit assertion of the personality of the Logos, which with great propriety and significance precedes the mention of his agency in the next verse.

Perhaps to have redde some two or three difficult authors with a master, may have made *Græculus* almost a match for the brightest boys in the upper forms of our public schools. Perhaps something more should be done in the study of the Greek language, before a man begin to play the critic in it. Ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἐστὶ πειρασ τελευταίου ἐπιγεννημα.

I am, Sir,

your most obedient,

PERHAPS,

5 0059

N^o III.

Short Strictures on Dr. Priestley's Letters to
Dr. Horsley.

Dr. Horsley is wholly uninformed to whom he is indebted for the communication of these remarks; which were sent to him in a letter without date or signature, and in a hand quite unknown to him, early in the spring. To express his sense of the civility, and for the service of the common cause, Dr. Horsley thinks it his duty to give them to the public. He persuades himself that his anonymous correspondent will not be offended that this is done without his leave, which would have been previously asked, had not his concealment of himself rendered an application to him impracticable.

LETTERS to Dr. Horsley, p. 9. Jesus Christ N^o III
is come in the flesh. Dr. P. should produce an instance, where the whole phrase of *coming in the flesh* is applied to the birth or appearances of any mere man. The instances alledged by him prove nothing to his purpose.

P. 13. The epistles of Ignatius. Dr. P. is certainly in the right to reprobate these epistles if he can. They subvert all his theology and history*. But who are these learned in general that have given them up as spurious? There are the names of great critics on the other side: of whose arguments Archbishop Wake has given a judicious summary in his preliminary discourse; and till they are refuted, Dr. Horsley has an undoubted right to appeal to these epistles, as containing the sentiments of an apostolical father.

* The chief of them are mentioned by Cave under Ignatius.

N^o III. P. 14. If Dr. P. could prove, that the Nazarenes held the same doctrines with the Ebionites, what would it avail his cause? Could he prove by this medium, that the Nazarenes *continued* in the doctrine of the Apostles, and that the reputed catholic church fell off from it? Did the Ebionites learn from the Apostles, that John the Baptist came preaching in the days of Herod the king of Judea; that Christ descended into Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism; cum multis aliis? See Epipha. Hæres. xxx. § 14.

24. Here and throughout, Dr. P. supposes the unitarian doctrine to have had a general prevalence among the gentile Christians, and universal among the Jewish. Does this well agree, with respect to the gentiles, with his quotation from Origen at the bottom of page 20?

The much controverted passage of Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho*, and the meaning of ἡμετέρου γένους, are well illustrated by Mr. Bingham, in his Vindication of the doctrine and liturgy of the Church of England, printed at Oxford 1774, page 23. There were, according to Justin, some countrymen of his, Jews and Samaritans, “who confess him to be the Christ, yet affirm him to be a meer man.” The same Justin says in another place, First Apol. p. 78, Ed. Thirlby, that he had observed more and truer Christians from among the gentiles, than from among the Jews and Samaritans. This passage [which helps to confirm Mr. Bingham’s translation of ἡμετέρου γένους] compared with the other, contains the testimony of Justin, that there were only some of the Jews and Samaritans, and still fewer of the gentiles, professing to believe in Christ, who affirmed him to be a meer man.

Pag. 39. Dr. P. who seems to be very mo-

* See Priestley, page 127.

derately skilled in Greek, may give a faulty translation sometimes through inadvertency. But what shall we say for his rendering αἰτίαν ἔυλογον, a *specious pretence*? Can he really think, that Athanasius meant to speak in this stile of the conduct of the apostles? Αἰτία ἔυλογος occurs in Chrysostom on Matth. xxiv. 42. (tom. ii. p. 448. Ed. Savil) where the αἰτία signifies somewhat differently, ἔυλογος bears the same sense, as here, of wise and reasonable.

Nº III.

In the same passage ἔρχεσθαι is mistranslated. As the present infinitives have sometimes a future sense in the best classic authors, it here means a Messiah to come; as the next sentence evinces, where Christ already come is said, ἐληλυθέναι.

49. Another inaccurate version of Athanasius.

50. Another of the like kind from Chrysostom. Dr. P. makes him say, Our Saviour *never* taught his own divinity in express words. Chrysostom, I apprehend, says, that he did not, every where, or, on all occasions, οὐ πανταχόθεν, speak plainly of his own divinity. In the judgment of Chrysostom he sometimes did so. See on John vi. 35, 36. viii. 58. x. 30.

56. Last paragraph. Caiaphas adjures our Saviour by the living God to tell them, *Whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?* Our Lord avows these characters, and adds, *Nevertheless* [rather, moreover] *I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power.* How can Dr. Priestley be sure, in what sense Caiaphas understood our Lord's answer, when he rent his cloths, and accused him of blasphemy? Was the notion of a Son of God superior to all created beings, then unknown among the Jews? See, besides Bp. Bull's Defens. Fidei Nicænæ, cap. i. sect. i. § 16. p. 13. a remarkable passage quoted from Philo Jud. by Dr Randoph, Vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity, part I. p. 29.

LETTER

L E T T E R V.

Dr. P. makes the fathers *acknowledge*, that the apostles did not preach the divinity of Christ *early*, and confidently supposes them *never* to have taught it.

According to the more general opinion, St. Matthew wrote his gospel early and for the Jews. In the opening of this gospel he applies the name Emanuel to our Lord, and gives his own interpretation of it, *God with us*: by which, plain people conceive him to mean what St. Paul expresses, *God manifest in the flesh*; and the apostolical Ignatius, *God appearing in the form of a man*. Ad. Eph. xix. If we are led into an error, it is by taking St. Matthew's words in their literal and obvious sense; and was he less solicitous about the truth than even Dr. P. himself? If Dr. P. had been to write a gospel, according to his own theology, would he have set out with such an application and interpretation of the name Emmanuel? *Quod tu non feceris, Ego feci*? might St. Paul ask; who writes with the greatest simplicity, and never uses any amplification of any subject treated by him: and, as we may justly conclude, would not here have spoken of Christ as he has done, but because he had very different notions of his dignity from those of Dr. P.: to declare which notions he was not afraid of Jewish prejudices and clamour.

In the same gospel our Lord is introduced declaring, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Here the negative *οὐδεὶς* being universal, we seem to be told, that the Father and Son are incomprehensible to all created intelligences, and that all that they can really know of the Father, must

must be in and thro' the Son, by his illuminating spirit. Does such a declaration consist with Dr. P.'s plan, with what our Lord says of himself in the next verse but one, I am meek and lowly in heart? *Utique parum modestè (sit verbo venia) de seipso locutus est Christus, aut alios loquentes audit, si nihil interea pater merum hominem se esse noverit.* Burnet de Fide et Officiis, p. 20*.

The same Saviour, in the concluding paragraph of this gospel, commands his apostles to evangelize all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Dr. P. considers the Holy Spirit as an attribute of the Father, not a person. But does our Lord, if he had only an exalted humanity, thrust himself in between the most high, and one of his incommunicable attributes? or does he join two persons with an attribute, in a most solemn form of words, which leads us almost inevitably to believe, that the third is a person also? Would such a conduct appear suitable to his care and tenderness to guide his flock into the whole truth? The supposition seems impossible; and nothing to be more certain than that the very first evangelist, in full harmony with all the succeeding sacred writers, exhibits to us the divinity of Christ, in the beginning, middle, and end of his gospel.

It is objected to this form of baptism, that the use of it does not appear any where in the Acts of the apostles. This objection is, I think, well answered by Mr. Bingham, Vindicat. p. 37—41. particularly from Acts xix.

P. 63. Towards the end of the first paragraph, Dr. P. seems to betray some suspicions, that St. Paul did in truth teach the divinity of Christ.

* This is quoted by Dr. Randolph, Vind. Part II. p. 42. where a similar passage is cited from St. Chrysostom.

P. 69, last paragraph. The reasoning appears rather extraordinary on the passage of Athanasius, who seems made by Dr. P. to consider things in the same light, between which he is studious to point out an eternal difference.

L E T T E R VII.

P. 92. "If the doctrine of the Trinity be true, it is no doubt in the highest degree important and interesting." So Dr. P. can say, when it serves his purpose. But how does this agree with his previous observations, N° IV. p. 85, &c.?

P. 133. It is somewhat hard to discover how the remark on Eusebius, and his treatment of the Unitarians, *at that time very numerous*, agrees with the observation in the preceding paragraph.

P. 135. Was the hymn, which as Pliny tells us in his noted epistle, was sung to Christ quasi Deo, novel in the time of Paul of Samosata?

P. 136. Dr. P. should, I think, have prefixed that which seems to be his ruling maxim, that the human mind is competent to search all things, even the deep things of God.

Whether he, or Mr. Burgh, in the first chapter of his Scriptural Confutation, lays down the province of reason in the better way, let others determine.

N° IV.

I W. & M. c. 18.

N° IV. Provided always, That neither this act, nor any clause, article, or thing herein contained, shall extend ——— to give any ease, benefit, or advantage to ——— any person that shall deny in his preaching or writing the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as it is declared in the aforesaid articles of religion.

N° V.

N^o V.

1 W. & M. c. 18.

Provided always, That no congregation or assembly for religion, shall be permitted or allowed by this act, until the place of such meeting shall be certified to the bishop of the diocese, or to the archdeacon of the archdeaconry, or to the Justices of the peace at the general or quarter sessions of the peace for the county, city, or place in which such meeting shall be held, and registered in the said bishop's or archdeacon's court respectively, or recorded at the said general or quarter sessions. N^o V.

N^o VI.

19 G. III. c. 44.

— be it enacted, — That every person dissenting from the church in holy orders, or pretended holy orders, or pretending to holy orders, being a preacher or teacher of any congregation of dissenting Protestants who—shall take the oaths, and make and subscribe the declaration against popery, required by the said act (1 W. & M. c. 18.) and shall also make and subscribe a declaration in the words following, videlicet, N^o VI.

“ I A. B. do solemnly declare in the presence
 “ of Almighty God, that I am a Christian and
 “ a Protestant, and as such, that I believe that the
 “ scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as
 “ commonly received among Protestant churches,
 “ do contain the revealed will of God; and that
 “ I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine
 “ and practice.”

shall

N^o VI. shall be — entitled to all the exemptions, benefits, privileges, and advantages granted to Protestant dissenting ministers by 1 W. & M. c. 18. and by 10 A. c. — and every such person, qualifying himself as aforesaid, shall be exempted from serving in the militia of this kingdom, and shall also be exempted from any imprisonment or other punishment by virtue of the act of uniformity, &c.

F I N I S.

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